

THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN IRAN 1941-1947
WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO FIRQA-YI DIMŪKRĀT
IN AZERBAIJAN

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my aunt, Mrs. Vajīha Naqshīna, Marjory Anne MacLean and Hilary Le Cornu.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the political parties in Iran between 1941 and 1947, with particular emphasis on the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* of Azerbaijan, an autonomous movement, supported popularly and caused by the historical circumstances of Rīzā Shāh's dictatorship (1921-1941) and subsequent central government pressure which culminated in the rejection by the *Majlis* of Pīshavarī's credentials. Despite increasing governmental pressure the movement became self-governing and was supported by the Soviet Union though opposed by America and Britain, which opposition ultimately aided its downfall, though not before a considerable number of beneficial reforms had been carried out in the province.

This field has been hitherto unexplored due to the need to know *Āzarī* Turkish, Persian and English, and because in the Pahlavi period investigation was difficult, materials scarce and interviews very dangerous. Only after the fall of the Shah has there been the chance to undertake original work and publish conclusions.

Chapter 1, a background sketch, discusses the emergence of parties from *anjumans*, the coup d'etat of 1921 and the subsequent dictatorship of Rīzā Shāh, his reforms and his relations with Russia and the West. His close links with Germany meant an unavoidable involvement in World War II. Chapter 2 describes the parties which filled the power vacuum on the abdication of Rīzā Shāh; this general view indicates the prevalent political atmosphere and structure. Chapter 3 examines the Tudeh Party which was the most important at this time: its origins, platform, involvement with Trades Unions and ultimate failure. Chapter 4 describes the background to the Azerbaijan movement: its causes, formation, central government opposition and initial successes. Chapter 5 is devoted entirely to the

reforms and achievements of the movement of which there were many considering the shortness of the period. Chapter 6 deals with the international reaction, the role of the United Nations, and that of the then Prime Minister, Qayām, who concluded agreements with the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* leaders and the USSR. The successful pressure from the West and the U.S. on the central government to crush the movement and the international agreement between America and the USSR, are analysed. Finally, the causes of failure of the movement and the subsequent ban on political parties are described.

Appendices A to D supplement Chapters 3, 4 and 6.

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PREFACE

Azerbaijan has always been a revolutionary province. She has always suffered from neglect and discrimination and remained sadly under-developed despite enjoying rich natural resources. As not only an Azeri, but an Azeri with a strong interest in politics, I have been intrigued by the causes of such a state.

From early childhood, I was continually warned not to discuss the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* movement and its leader Pīshavarī, as I would be breaking the law. Yet privately I was aware that many relatives were involved deeply with the movement and in talking to them about the leaders and events I began to build an understanding of this aspect of the Azeri historical consciousness.

However my efforts to study this problem more deeply were made more difficult by the paucity of materials, utterly out of proportion to the complexity and importance of the subject. What little there was consisted of charges against Pīshavarī, alleging treachery, adventurism and crude separatism.

I was naturally puzzled by the contradiction between my childhood understanding of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* as a worthwhile, reforming movement, and the official, written claims condemning the episode. I wanted to establish the truth. What frightens so many people about this movement? Was it a good or bad thing for Azerbaijan? What was the reason for the central government's sensitivity? What factors contributed to the course of events that we understand took place?

Briefly, then, the fact of having so many surviving leaders of the movement amongst my own relatives encouraged me to take the opportunity to discover with their help just

what this movement meant, why it achieved such a degree of popularity and success in its year of existence, and exactly why it suffered opposition from the government, conservative forces and influential Western powers.

This thesis owes its value to the efforts of these relatives and their families and their friends who assisted me. In the absence of written materials their information made this thesis possible. Of the many to whom I am indebted, I can here name only the most important: B. Khandagh (father, member of Youth Movement); K. Javādiyān (uncle, a Colonel in the Central Government forces which invaded Azerbaijan); S. Sharīfī (close family friend, army colonel and Pīshavarī's military adviser); A. Pūrī (cousin, leader of the Tabriz local committee); R. Rasūlī (cousin, Minister of Commerce and Industry); Mrs. S. Ākhundūf (grandmother); Mrs. Naqshīna (aunt, active member of local committee); Mrs. Rīzā'ī (aunt, member of Women's Movement within the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*); and finally S. Jāvīd (friend, Minister of Interior), who is an eminent and careful scholar of the movement but was prevented from making public his work by the restrictions of the Pahlavī dynasty. Since the Revolution of 1979, he has been able to begin publishing his research and has most generously allowed me the use of his findings and materials. And to the many others who are too numerous to mention by name, I record warm thanks.

Although these interviews were the primary source, another important part of my material was the collection of contemporary newspapers which provided a great deal of information. Amongst these were various radical publications including the newspaper of the movement (*Āzarbāyjān*) and the publications of the *Hizb-i Tūda*, including *Rahbar* and *Mardum*. I have also made use of foreign newspapers, e.g. *The Times*. Consequently I am indebted to the National Library of Iran in Tehran which facilitated my reading these newspapers, and in particular made microfilms for my use. I must also record my

thanks to the Public Records Office in London for supplying Foreign Office material: the staff there were more than helpful and gave full and admirable consideration to the particular needs associated with my blindness. A similar weight of gratitude is felt towards the staff of the British Museum. Most of all, I am particularly grateful to the University of Edinburgh Main Library and its staff who provided me with access to a microfilm machine and gave me help with my peculiar needs and difficulties.

These thanks would indeed be incomplete without mentioning at some length the efforts and interest shown by friends and mentors within the Department of Middle Eastern Studies of this University. The first mention must of course be of Dr. Sabri-Tabrizi, my supervisor during this research, who has been generous with ideas and comments. Another academic who took a special and very welcome interest in this work, is Dr. McDonald, also of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, who kindly concerned himself with some of the difficulties of this work.

A number of students, known collectively as 'the readers', performed stoic and immeasurable service as my eyes during the last few years. It is quite obvious that my entire research was dependent upon their cheerful willingness and considerable efforts. Included amongst these assistants, and friends, are: Paul Wilson, Amanda Chandler, Therese Vogt, Shahida Khan, Manīzha Bayānī, Peter Barr, Furūgh Rādsa'īd, Sakīna Ahmad-dūst, Simon Hayden and Gulnār Javādī.

My aunt in Iran, Mrs. Vajīha Naqshīna, overcame many problems which threatened the completion of this dissertation. In particular she spent much time and considerable energy in overcoming the administrative difficulties of transferring funds from Iran. Without her labours, I could not have survived in

Edinburgh.

The funds necessary to finance my studies were met by my parents to whom I record affectionate thanks.

The heroic and patient efforts of Jenny Maisels, my typist, must be congratulated and her help acknowledged. Jenny struggled bravely and successfully with many unfamiliar words and names in the text, and has come through victorious and, I hope, unscathed.

I extend my sincerest and deepest thanks to both Hilary Le Cornu and Marjory Anne MacLean, who gave me their valuable time and company in writing and completing this article. Their extraordinarily selfless attitudes and consistent dedication to another's work fully deserves recognition at this point.

Needless to say, the ideas included in this thesis are entirely my own, and none of the above persons are responsible either for their accuracy or their plausibility.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of the material resources used in this research has a crucial bearing on the value and reliability of academic work in this particular field. The critique offered here of preceding scholars hinges upon the limitations of their sources, and the contribution I hope to have made in this area depends upon a fuller and deeper exploration of all available literature and of previously unutilised oral information.

In order to justify and clarify this claim we may first distinguish three categories of written material. The first of these may be termed the **traditionally popular** sources, which, like those of any discipline, are over-used and tend to be misunderstood if they are not used in conjunction with more fundamental and searching exploration. The first of six types amongst these sources is the Iranian newspaper press. This varies between extremes of incredible anti- **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** criticism and fanatical pro-Azerbaijani exaggeration and I have attempted to maintain a policy of judicious balance between the two. Similar drawbacks exist with the reports of Parliamentary proceedings, where the conflicts of personal ideologies obscure the true development of identifiable policies. Thirdly, the Western press of Britain and the United States was biased, understandably enough, against anything suspected of Russian support; such sources have their advantages factually but do not help us critically. Similarly, the documents of the British Public Records Office and U.S. Foreign Relations show this fear in practice, as information was not collected locally - their only advantage is contemporariness and we must proceed cautiously in relation to them. Fifthly, Memoirs of Western protagonists are liberally laced with misleading patriotism and no unbiased account can be easily extracted from such sources. Finally, the books and articles, as will be

all too clear in the course of this critique, copy each other and lack the experience of time or place, with hardly more than scanty reference to, and indeed understanding of, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* movement.

The second collection of sources which, ideally, the researcher would consult, are the Russian documents relating to the affair. This opportunity to see both sides of the crisis is denied us by the official unavailability of these writings, a reticence which frustrates in part the enquirer's pretensions to prejudice-free investigation.

And so we come to the third class of sources, and the area in which this research seeks to extend thinking beyond previous understanding. In particular, the newspapers of the province, particularly Azerbaijan itself, are a primary source of illuminating knowledge and provided that the undoubted manipulation of their accounts for propaganda purposes is cautiously abstracted, they are indispensable documents. Exactly the same must be said for the much-maligned writings of contemporary figures. As an Azerbaijani myself, I have had the advantage of being able to utilise material in *Āzarī* and, even more importantly, have been able to make extensive use of impressions and information gathered from interviews with key characters in these events. These interviews are the main means by which the present research has been able to make a radically new contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the subject.

The problems outlined above have threatened to confound research into even the most central issues in this thesis; in particular investigation into the democratic movement in Azerbaijan has been bedevilled by the arguably slanderous attacks of previous writers who claimed that the movement was separatist, Russian-backed and Communist-atheist.

Firstly, the question of separatism must be disposed of. Despite a meticulous investigation of all the documents from the beginning of this period (September 3rd onwards), including newspaper articles and reports of action taken, no indication has emerged of any move towards, or desire for, separation from Iran. As Lenczowski points out, "no evidence supports the assumption that the Firqeh Demokrat Party wanted the separation of Azerbaijan from Iran".¹ Indeed, reference is constantly made to the integrity, independence and freedom of Iran.

However, writers such as Chubin and Zabih label the movements in Azerbaijan and Khuzistan as 'separatist regimes', suggesting even that the Red Army was reluctant to support the 'separatist movement'.² Razi attributes to 'the separatist movements of the North' the motive for the formation of the Dimūkrāt-i Īrān Party.³ Doenecke⁴ claims that "the separatist Azerbaijan regime was backed by the pro-Communist Tudeh Party", while Courtois explains that latterly "separatist chiefs fled to the USSR".⁵

Other writers go still farther and claim that Azerbaijan was separated from Iran at this stage. Qāsimī says, for instance, that "Pishevari, with fighting and killing people, destroyed the independence and integrity of Iran, and separated Azerbaijan".⁶

In reality, at the most basic level Azerbaijan's background is that of a province which was constantly

1. Lenczowski, "The Communist Movement in Iran", MEJ, vol.1, 1947.

2. Chubin and Zabih, Foreign Relations in Iran, 1974, p.36.

3. Razi, "Genesis of Party in Iran", Iranian Studies, vol.III, 2, 1970.

4. Doenecke, "Iran's Role in Cold War Revisionism", p.98.

5. Courtois, "The Tudeh Party", p.18.

6. A Qāsimī, Tārīkhcha-yi Jabha-yi Millī, p.10.

struggling for the independence, integrity and freedom of the whole of Iran. In no way, therefore, could it consider separation from Iran or annexation to another country (i.e. the Soviet Union). Documentation to substantiate this is readily available. The first part of the September 3rd declaration called for the integrity and freedom of an independent Iran; a survey of all the issues of *Āzarbāyjān* shows no sentiments but those which are an encouragement to strive for Iran's security - Iran's interests come first throughout. An unbiased and careful study of the meetings of the Committee, Congress and Parliament reveals no indication, implicit or explicit, that this was a separatist movement. The point is clearly made by the fact that Pīshavarī did not appoint a War Minister or Foreign Minister in the Cabinet announced on December 12th, that Azerbaijan did not consider itself an independent state.

The historians and reporters who oppose the point of view here expounded, and insist that the obligatory use of Turkish as the official language in government and education constituted separatism are misguided, for the right to use the local language is a fundamental human right. It is equally unreasonable to describe as 'separatist' the placing of Azerbaijanis in official posts because they had to understand the language used and the problems arising from this. This was demonstrated during the government suppression, when many people were arrested. One case involved a mistaken capital sentence passed upon a prisoner whose file was misunderstood and whose interview was useless because of a total language barrier. It was only by chance that an interest was taken in the case, so that an interpreter was brought in and the mistake quickly rectified: this was a common occurrence in Azerbaijan.¹

An example of a historian who talks of a 'puppet

1. Iskandari, personal interview; he was the person who realised the error.

government' is W.M. Partin in his thesis *United States-Iranian Relations 1945-7*. Partin concentrates mainly on the Azerbaijan problem, but his work suffers from the one-sided approach of the author, who bases himself upon Western sources hostile to the movement and is influenced by the attitude of the Central Government, which was the bitterest enemy of the movement. As a matter of acceptable academic practice, Partin ought to have given consideration to the material published by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*. Instead his thesis is replete with comments such as "Officials in Washington viewed the establishment of these Soviet-sponsored regimes with concern".¹

Another Western commentator was Robert Rossow Jr., who was in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Tabriz from December 1945 to June 1946 and who therefore witnessed first-hand the enthusiastic support given to the movement. Despite such an advantage, Rossow too appears to be predisposed against gaining a clear view of the truth, and also presents a distorted account: "The rebellion was of course successful and in December 1945 the 'Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan' was established, a Russian puppet independent of all control of the Iranian government in Tabriz".²

The 'puppet' claim must meet this decisive challenge: how could this imported foreign 'puppet' gain such astonishing support? Consider the increase in support between the first declaration of September 3rd and the general election to the National parliament. In Tabriz alone, 23,991 votes were polled in three days, a very substantial number for that time. Crowds rendered the pavements impassable by throwing flowers, sweets and fruit. Where did such a 'puppet' government find this sort of support? From the Soviet Union? A correspondent from *Īrān-i Mā*, returning from this incident, and being questioned

1. *Op. cit.*, p.93.

2. Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan, 1946", *MEJ*, 10, 1956.

on the government's influence, answered that something certainly existed. The *Fidā'īs* could not spring up from the earth as quickly as that. Iskandarī, a member of the Tudeh, expressed this very clearly. "We are often accused of being Russia's puppet, but this is completely false. We are merely realists. The Tudeh will accept aid from any nation that encourages and supports progressive elements working for the benefit of Iran's population: but it will oppose any attempt to dominate the country."¹

It is undeniable that Soviet pressure did assist the creation of the movement, simply because it prevented the central government from crushing the movement as it had the *Khiyābānī* movement of 1920, or the *Lāhūtī* movement which followed. It is also certainly true that after the withdrawal of the Soviets, the Western-backed Iranian government crushed the movement, killing over 30,000 Azerbaijanis. However, to claim that the Soviet withdrawal resulted in the complete collapse of the movement is a gross distortion of the situation.²

Pisyān wrote on the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* soon after the collapse of the National Government. Studying this work, one soon realises that throughout he calls them adventurers, rebels and traitors, but fails to look at these real achievements, true aims or the reaction they popularly evinced. Denying their reforms he says, "All the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* left behind was grief and orphans and an abiding hatred of the Soviet Union".³

In his confusion he goes further and simultaneously condemns Russia for her ineptitude in failing to communise her small neighbour or gain the Northern Oil Concessions, but praises

1. Lenczowski, "The Communist Movement in Iran", *MEJ*, 1 (1947), p.34. N.B. the Tudeh and Democratic Parties had amalgamated at this time.

2. See Chapter 6.

3. Pisyān, *Marg Būd Bāzgasht ham Būd*, Teheran, 1947.

her saying the blame should be attached not to Russia but to the traitors in her military who were subsequently executed. Further, in his praise of the achievements of the Iranian Army he described the difficulty of crushing the heavily armed Azerbaijani force, a force which history in fact tells us was surrounded immediately and defenceless, since the Russians had removed Azerbaijan's heavier weaponry upon their preceding retreat.

Pisyān misleads his reader over the reception received by the Iranian Army. The many locals who, he says, avenged themselves upon members of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and the *Fidā'īs* are popularly understood to have been Iranian soldiers in civilian attire, and the gifts showered upon the victorious redeemers by grateful Azerbaijani citizens turn out probably to have been the spoils of looting and violence carried out by the Iranian troops.

Another writer, A. Mustawfī,¹ who was governor of Azerbaijan in 1940, harboured a resentment of democratic sympathisers in general and a hatred of Azerbaijanis in particular, and this showed in his discriminatory attitude towards Azerbaijan (see Chapter 4). He subsequently produced three volumes in which again the Azerbaijanis were accused of treachery, adventurism and rebellion. With a mocking style of political writing he unsubtly disguises the reforms and achievements of the National Government. The reception enjoyed by Pīshavarī on arriving for negotiations in Teheran is re-interpreted as a bribed set-up by the Tudeh Party who wished to draw the attention of Moscow Radio and ultimately to encourage separatism and foreign intervention, and in general he has a condemning attitude towards the Soviet Union and the Bolshevik Revolution.

1. Mustawfī, A., Tārīkh-i Ijtimā'ī va Idārī-yi Dawra-yi Qājāriyya, pp.421-2.

A. Qāsimī takes a very similar line of argument but takes an even more extreme view, claiming that by suppression and violence, Pīshavarī effectively separated Azerbaijan from Iran. "The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt came into existence because of foreign interference and disappeared the same way".¹ And Dādāshzāda states that Pīshavarī assisted the Jangal movement in the cause of communism and upon its failure, decided to create the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt in order to separate from Iran.²

All the historians, including those sympathetic to the movement, as well as the media in the West and in Iran, described the movement as 'Communist', strongly suggesting that all its members were irreligious, perhaps anti-religion. Later historians, too, described them as Communists. However, a glance at the members of the National Parliament shows that almost all of them were devout Muslims; no assumptions as to the nature of the movement as a whole can be made from the fact that Pīshavarī happened to be a Communist. Two factors indicate that this was not an irreligious movement. Firstly, the precedent established by the Tudeh Party in Azerbaijan had demonstrated that such an approach could not work, and no-one was so ignorant as to repeat the attempt. Secondly, Bīriyā, the Minister of Education, for example, kept a Qu'ran in his pocket. A very religious anthem was also commonly sung in schools:

Oh God, who has created us from nothing, put your blessing upon us. Guide us in straight paths and right actions by your divine power. Enable us to acquire knowledge, and grant us the wisdom of science and art, in order to save our fatherland. Protect and support our land; give us knowledge, a pure heart and good health. Bless us by your grace.³

1. Qāsimī, A., Tārīkhcha-yi Jabha-yi Millī-yi Īrān, Teheran, n.d.
2. Dādāshzāda, G.B., Zarrahā-yi Nifāq, Teheran, n.d., p.88.
3. Āzarī Fulklūr Şahīfaları, nos. 10-11, compiled by Dr. S. Jāvīd, p.4, 1981.

All of this evidence reveals that the movement was in fact trying to provide true Islamic doctrine, which in certain respects resembles Communist principles. It is sheer ignorance of the facts, however, to assume that the movement was derived from Communism.

The false propaganda of the historians, press and media made a deep impression upon the following generation, whose knowledge of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* consisted of: (1) the damage done to the independence and integrity of Iran; (2) the separatist nature of the movement; and (3) the victory of the brave young Shāh to prevent total separation. This view was intensified by the military parades annually on 12th December, the anniversary of the 'rescue' of Azerbaijan from the Russians, and by the commonly insulting disrespect shown to Pīshavarī. Many questions have not been asked: Who really was Pīshavarī? What did he do? With what social circumstances did he have to work? How did he react against conservatives, imperialists and the monarchy? What effect did he have on the political life of Iran? Why did he fail? These are the unpopular issues upon which I intend to shed some badly-needed light.

PART I

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction:

This chapter will be divided into three sections, dealing with the origin and development of the party system's beginnings. Since this area has been covered by others, our main concern here will simply be to give a resumé presenting the background to our main subject. Hence most of the material used is from secondary sources with a limited number of primary sources, related to the period 1900-41.

Our first section covers the nature of the party as a general phenomenon, in order to set our discussion of the background to the development of parties in Iran in a comprehensible context. The party system within Iran had its origins in a series of prototype parties - the **dawra**, **Band**, **Pārtī Bāzī** - which subsequently developed into the more structured **anjuman**, during the Constitutional Revolution.

The second section concentrates upon the revolutionary movements formed - in Gilan, Azerbaijan, **Khorasan** - primarily to fight foreign intervention in Iran and for an end to Iranian tyrannical rule which oppressed its people. These aims banded groups together and thus furthered the development of the party system within the country: the first organised party, the Communist Party of Persia, was formed in 1920.

The final section deals with the political upheavals associated with the rise to power and establishment of **Riżā Shāh**. In 1921, following his coup d'état which put him in

power, Riżā Khān encouraged the party system to develop. Upon his accession to the throne, however, Riżā Shāh began to see the parties as a serious and dangerous threat to his power, and began a campaign of suppression against them and trade-unions. All parties were banned or crushed, and Riżā Shāh passed a bill prohibiting any Communist membership; as a result, most parties either vanished or went underground for the whole period 1925-41. With the abdication of Riżā Shāh, the restrictions were lifted, and an immediate mushrooming of parties occurred in reaction to the cessation of suppression. These supported many different causes: friendship with various foreign powers, nationalism, socialism, etc.; the biggest and most influential throughout Iran remained the Tudeh Party.

Political Parties:

The English term 'party' describes a structure which is both a social organisation¹ and a polity - a miniature political system with its own hierarchy. The party exhibits distinctive patterns of power distribution, since as a decision-making body, it involves itself with a representative process, an electoral system, and further subprocesses for recruiting leaders, defining goals, and resolving internal conflicts. It thus shares the characteristics common to most social groups, while at the same time possessing its own distinctive characteristics. These can be summarised with four tentative constructs:²

- a) The party is a 'clientele-oriented structure: the open, informal, personalised nature of the party system is in contrast with that of the bureaucratic model.

1. Eldersveld, S.J., Political Parties: A Behavioural Analysis, Chicago, 1956, p.1.

2. Ibid., p.5.

- b) it operates as a structural system that seeks to translate or convert social and economic interests directly into political power.
- c) its power structure is hierarchical, although not necessarily oligarchic.
- d) it has a leadership that is well-organised, self-conscious, self-perpetuating, congruent, conspiring, and with a high turnover rate at all levels of the hierarchy.

The nature of the party structure is governed by three main factors: it is heavily influenced by environmental pressures - socio-economic conditions and political history; by the 'political subculture', i.e. the normative and operational codes adhered to in the power process; and by the time factor, for the characteristics of a party structure normally evolve gradually over time, with room allowed for change or reorientation at critical points along the way.

The party system itself manifests itself in three main types: the single-party, two-party systems, or a multi-party structure.

The two-party is closely associated with the Anglo-Saxon world, although it is neither universal among such countries nor exclusive to them - two-party systems have existed also in Turkey and some Latin American countries, and gradual evolution towards such a system is becoming apparent in parts of Continental Europe. The two-party system is not monolithic within itself, a fact illustrated clearly in a comparison between the British and American patterns. In Britain, the party structure is usually highly centralised, particularly in the Labour Party. In the United States, on the other hand, there exists little organisation beyond that of the State, and the power of national leaders and committees is strictly regulated and controlled.

One of the possible causal factors in the formation of the earlier British and American parties is considered to be corruption within society.¹

A typology of the multi-party system is somewhat difficult to establish, for the number of parties involved may range from three to a theoretical infinity, while there is an equally extensive variation within each of the parties individually. The tripartite system of France or Belgium, for example, show no common features, and there is little similarity between the quadri-partite systems of Scandinavia and Switzerland.²

The single-party system has usually been regarded as a new political structure that developed in the twentieth century, exemplified by the former regimes in Germany and Italy, and the present Soviet government. This view is maintained, despite the fact that dictatorships - either a one-man or one-party rule - have been known throughout recorded history. The one-party system conforms closely to the needs of a dictatorship, yet it has its role in a democratic framework. The close resemblance between the French and Russian Communist parties illustrates that structurally there can be little difference between their forms, although the single-party system might be either left or right wing.

There is no clear line of demarcation between parties in single- or multi-party systems as regards their internal organisation: the one derives from, and often remains close to, the other.³ The other two systems as a whole nevertheless require independent analysis.⁴

1. Ostrogorski, M.I., in Duverger, M., Political Parties, Lon. 1964, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.229.

3. Duverger, op. cit., p.255.

4. Ibid., p.257.

The party in a single party system aims to create new élites while creating and fashioning political leaders capable of governing with tight control since the masses themselves do not have the potential for governing themselves. The major difficulty inherent in such a systems belongs to the fact that the country's leaders become isolated from the masses.¹

Two main types of single-party system exist - Fascist and Communist, and these possess a clear doctrinal differentiation.² Communist parties have been defined as "the tools of the proletariat to overthrow the authority of the middle classes", and Fascist parties as "the tools of the middle classes to retain their power, and prevent it falling into the hands of the proletariat".³ These definitions are socially inadequate, however. Both types of party begin by making revolutionary statements. Under Fascism, however, these change to a fundamental conservatism, which undertakes only minor reforms, and seeks to retain power for the middle classes; while Communism on the other hand, is driven by a continuing revolutionary energy that seeks to build socialism, increase production, and bring about modernisation.

A typology of single-party systems should also be able to account for some single parties which are neither ideologically nor organisationally truly totalitarian - such as the Republican People's Party which ruled in Turkey between 1923 and 1946.⁴ The case of Iran, however, differed in several respects.

Iran's political system was simultaneously feudal and patrimonial, while its ideological legitimation was provided

1. Duverger, op. cit., p.258.

2. Ibid., pp.263-4.

3. Ibid., p.265.

4. Ibid., p.276.

through Islam and tradition. No political parties as such appeared to lead the Constitutional Revolution of 1905, as had happened in Turkey, for example.¹ The political system was modified, however, through Iran's contact with European culture. Although traditional and modern systems inevitably overlap as adaptation takes place, the outstanding features of modern political institutions exist in the constitution, parliament and electoral process. These contrast with the traditionalist emphasis on monarchy, and, when tradition is incorporated into the modern institution, the adoption of some of the modern nationalist goals, such as reform, modernisation and industrialisation, and can graft new authoritarian techniques on to the old ways of absolutism.²

Here again, Iran's political development is divergent, since it is connected with the causes of the Constitutional Revolution, and with the creation of the *Majlis*. Thus in Iran, two political groupings, the Democrats and the Moderates can lay some claim to the label 'party'.³

We must, however, before considering these parties, refer to the political prototypes that preceded the parties proper, and upon which the latter were grouped. These include: *pārtī*,⁴ *band*, *dawra*, *frāksiyūn*, and *anjuman*.

Pārtī Bāzī - a term that refers to individual petitioning of bureaucracy, military or security organisations, in order to achieve a stated aim.⁴

Band - a collaboration of like-minded thinkers in a mutually supportive, though informally organised political

1. Cottam, op. cit., 'Political Party Development in Iran', Iranian Studies, vol. 3, 1968.

2. Razi, op. cit., p.60.

3. Binder, L., Iran: Political Development in a Changing Society, Toronto 1964, p. 206.

4. Razi, op. cit., p.60.

group, usually named after one of its leading members, or families (e.g. *Band-i Mas^c ūdiān*). Some of these cells were formed into minor parties, or *fraksiyūns*, but they were more commonly the antecedents of the political *anjuman*.

Dawra - a more stable party prototype. It comprised a small group of friends or relatives, numbering around 15, who met weekly or bi-weekly in members' homes or at some designated place. Such groups were not mutually exclusive, but allowed for informal political discussion and co-operation, particularly during periods of political repression. The *Dawra* anticipated the *anjuman*, and also entered the common vocabulary as a legislative term after World War II.¹ The system through which Iranian politicians communicated with their 'constituents' paralleled its primary source of information - the bazaar rumour. But whereas the *Dawra* was an upper class social habit, its members deriving primarily from the upper middle classes, the *Dawra* system referred to a structurally amorphous, indeterminate, and peculiarly Iranian mode of political activity.²

Each *Dawra* member generally participated and was active in at least 2 or 3 other *Dawras*, and this allowed for rapid yet discreet transmission of the matters under discussion. These in turn fed into the bazaar rumour, which conveyed information to associates, and to customers, thus linking the élite with the population as a whole.

The *Dawra* system is deeply rooted in Iranian history, and the celebrated *Khānigāhs*, for example, represent a type of continuous or permanent *Dawra*, comprising *Darvīsh* and *Šūfī* leaders.³ *Dawras* could easily turn into political action groups,

1. Bill, J., *Politics of Iran*, 1972, Bell & Howell, Ca. USA, p.44.

2. Miller, W.A., "Political Organisation in Iran: From *Dawra* to Political Party", *MEJ* 1969, vol.23, p.164.

3. Bill, J., "Plasticity of Informal Politics: The Case of Iran", *MEJ*, vol. 27, 1973, p.131.

as in recent years, and the **Khānigāhs** are known, too, for their political element. Moreover, **Dawras** in the form of **Farāmūshkhānas** (Freemason groups) frequently engaged in informal or clandestine activities that resulted in direct political influence.¹

Whereas Freemasonry appears to have anticipated the formation of radical and liberal parties in Europe, especially in France and Belgium,² the **Dawra** represents only one side of the "politics of informality" in Iran.

Frāksiyūn - again deriving from the French, refers to the parliamentary faction system in Iran. **Frāksiyūns** varied in the cohesion and stability of their membership. Most were temporary groupings during one **Majlis** session, others were of longer duration. Some were associated with political parties outside the **Majlis**, and important political decisions have been made in **frāksiyūns** which **Rizāzāda-yi Shafaq**³ has termed '**Shikasta-bastahā**' (those who shatter and regroup), because of their undefined, fragmented nature. **Shafaq** also refers to a system of "factions without parties", in which groups do not have "any permanence or durability and live their short lives haphazardly". This is not always the case, however, and **Frāksiyūn**-ism may have a lasting result, as both **Ibrahimiyan**⁴ and **Makki**⁵ point out.

Anjuman⁶ - the most structured and significant party

1. Rā'īn, E., Farāmūshkhāna va-farāmūsiyān dar Īrān, Teheran 1969, pp.219-220.

2. Algar, H., 'An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran', ME Studies 6, 1970, p.281.

3. Rizāzāda-yi Shafaq, Khāṭirāt-i Majlis va Dimūkrāsī-Chīst, Teheran 1955, pp.58-61.

4. Ābrahimiyan, E., 'Factionalism in Iran', ME Studies 14, vol.I, p.51.

5. Makki, H., Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Mashrūṭiyyat Dar Īrān, Teheran 1945-6 II, pp.337-9, III, pp.4-10.

6. Razi, op. cit., p.62.

prototype. **Anjumans** were societies or associations which existed to discuss social freedom and liberation from politically oppressive regimes. These two elements of discontent acted in the role of an absent ideology, and were responsible for holding the **anjumans'** members together, along with the need felt for modernisation.¹

The earliest attempt at uniting merchants and ^c**Ulama** was made, with partial success, by Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī Afghānī,² who believed that the ^c**Ulamā** should support the Iranian people against the tyranny of the Shāh. The consolidation of the **anjumans**, however, occurred towards the end of the reigns of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh, and it was this factor which made the Constitutional Revolution a real possibility.³

Secret societies such as these were generally unknown in the West, for they were modelled upon ancient Eastern societies,⁴ although several **anjumans** existed in France during this period. Early **anjumans** consisted primarily of revolutionary cells. Following the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, however, they developed very differently from other secret societies, becoming more open, increasing their membership, and openly communicating with each other.

Anjumans were of two types:⁵ the provincial **anjuman**, and the 'popular' or political **anjuman**. The provincial **anjumans** (**Anjuman-i Iyālatī** or **Vilāyatī**) were vigilant bodies which

1. Lambton, A., "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905-6", St. Anthony's Papers 4, 1958, p.48.

2. Keddī, N., 'Origins of Religious Radical Alliances in Iran', Past and Present 34, 1966, p.74.

3. Lambton, "Persian Political Societies 1906-11", St. Anthony's Papers 6, 1963, p.41.

4. Lambton, "Secret Societies", op. cit., p.43.

5. Lambton, "Persian Political Societies", op. cit., p.46.

represented the Central Government, and supervised the provincial governors. Each *Iyālat* comprised twelve members, and each *Vilāyat* six. Their duties included:

1. To decide the electoral and franchise rules.
2. To supervise provincial administration.
3. To answer complaints against governors.
4. To administer the revenue.¹

The political *anjumans*, which numbered over 100 in Teheran alone in the period immediately following the granting of the Constitution, had three purposes:

1. To strengthen the Constitution and to initiate reforms.
2. To watch over governmental actions and officials.
3. To appeal on behalf of individual citizens in cases of real or alleged injustice.

It is unrealistic in practice to distinguish between the two types of *anjuman*, for in fact, the provincial *anjuman* became 'popular', and acted as a central body to which the 'political' *anjumans* reported.² After the Revolution, the political *anjumans* possessed the potential to develop into parties, and this was certainly their function at this stage. As their role and power increased, politicians of many varied persuasions became involved with these types of structures; this then provided a link between the *Majlis* and the people, the latter easily influenced by the politicians. The *anjumans* were always prevented from becoming true parties by their lack of a coherent programme or ideology, and an almost total

1. Ittihadiyya, M., Origins of Political Parties, unpub. thesis, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1979, p.249.

2. Lambton, "Persian Political Societies", op. cit., p.47.

absence of national base.¹ Despite government opposition and suppression, from even the Shāh himself, **anjumans** continued to form, as in the case of the **Anjuman-i Muqaddas-i Millī** of **Isfahan**, later known as the **Anjuman-i Iyālatī**, which was set up in 1906. Various 'popular' **anjumans** were also established, including the **Anjuman-i Tijārat**, the **Anjuman-i Taraqqī**, and the **Anjuman-i Ittihādiyya**, formed by Isfahani theological students.

Anjumans were semi-political and semi-religious or messianic in character. The various **Ṭabaqāt** (strata) had their own **anjumans** - the **Shāhzādīgān**, **Ṭullāb** and **Asnāf**, for example. There were also reactionary **anjumans**, including the **Anjuman-i Varāmīn** led by Iqbāl al-Dawla, and the **Futūhāt**. **Dawlātābādī** claims that this last **anjuman** was created to disrupt the **Anjuman-i Āzarbāyjān**.² These reactionary **anjumans** were principally formed to counter the activities of various revolutionary **anjumans**, such as the **Anjuman-i Makhfī**, set up in February 1905/1322, and whose members (**Fidā'ī**) demanded a Court of Justice and the establishment of the **Majlis**.³ The best known members of this **Anjuman** were Sayyid **Ẓiyā Muḥammad Ṭabātābā'ī**, **Nāẓir al-Islām Kirmānī** and **Mīrzā Āqā Isfahānī**, and its duties lay in supporting the **Majlis**, and overseeing the deputies. **Kirmānī** maintains that its primary function was to awaken the political awareness of the populace, and that it later became more radical. He also suggests that Sayyid **Ẓiyā**'s main aim was to form a Republic,⁵ although some politicians argued that Republicanism and Constitutionalism were not mutually exclusive, and supported either ideology.

1. *Ittihadiyya*, *op. cit.*, p.251.

2. *Dawlātābādī*, *Hayāt-i Yaḥyā*, Teheran 1950.

3. *Kirmānī*, *Nāẓim al-Islām: Tārīkh-i Bīdārī-yi Īrānīyān*, Teheran 1946:1968, pp.6, 90.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

Kirmānī points out that this particular **Anjuman** was instrumental in bringing about the union of the two leading **Mujtahids**, Sayyid ^cAbdullāh-i Bihbahānī and Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Another **anjuman**, the **Anjuman-i Makhfī-yi Sānī**, was organised in Rīzā'iyya in 1324/1906 to continue the activities of the former **Anjuman**. This **Anjuman** was led by Malikzāda, the son of Sayyid Ziyā Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who advocated a hard line.¹ Some of its members were from the **Anjuman-i Makhfī**, but the latter was less active than this **Anjuman**. It published a paper, **Kawkab-dārī**, and secret missives, **Shabnāma**; it had a **Nīzamnāma**, (manifesto) and was, paradoxically, simultaneously open and secretive, dominated by Kirmānī. It amalgamated firstly with the better organised **Anjuman-i Anṣār**, and later with the **Anjuman-i Junūb**, which consisted of Shīrāzīs. At this point, its members decided to work for the welfare of the South.²

The **Anjuman-i Millī** was a highly secret, 60-strong group set up in March 1905/1323.³ Its members included Malik al-Mutakallimīn, Dawlatābādī and his brothers, and Āqā Mīrzā, a royal prince, as well as merchants, **mujtahids**, guildsmen, bureaucrats, Zoroastrian communities and tribes. Its committee of 9, and a still smaller group of 5, sat weekly.

This revolutionary **Anjuman** sought to unite the scattered efforts of the many already existing **Anjumans**. Malik-Zāda writes that this **Anjuman** sought the co-operation of the two chief **mujtahids**,⁴ and it is sometimes claimed to have had links with the Russian Social Democratic Party.⁵ Malik-Zāda claims that this **Anjuman** was very active in the Constitutional

1. Kirmānī, *op. cit.*, pp.233-4.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.74-8.

3. Malik-Zāda, *Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Mashrūṭiyat-i Īrān*, Teheran 1954.

4. Sayyid ^cAbd Allāh Bihbahānī and Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī.

5. Ittihadīyya, *op. cit.*, p.86.

Revolution, and that it supported the struggle behind the scenes.

Several **anjumans** worked closely with the **Āzādīkhāhān**, one of the most important being the **Anjuman-i Āzarbāyjān**, which had 2,962 members,¹ and was located in Teheran. The **Anjuman-i Āzarbāyjān** was a significant force because of its connection with the **Tabriz Anjuman** and the **Kumīta-yi Inqilābī** and also because of the policies of the Azerbaijani deputies. Its leader was **Taqī-Zāda**.

The **Anjuman-i Tabrīz** was established in 1906. According to **Kasravi**,² the **Tabrīzīs** took sanctuary in the British Consulate in order to force **Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrzā** to accept the Constitution, and upon leaving the Consulate, their leaders set up an **anjuman**. Its 20 members were promised the support and active co-operation of the **ʿUlamā**. This **Anjuman** acted provincially and in **Tabriz**, and had a small core called the **Markaz-i Ghaybī**. The **Tabriz Anjuman** soon began to show signs of a split between moderate and extreme factions, although the split never became final. Its activities included the editing of its own paper, and the organisation of a large scale strike in **Tabriz**.

The **Anjumans** became important upon the demise of the **Majlis**, and at the same time increased in hostility towards the **Shāh**. **Dawlatābādī** states that the **anjumans** picked and trained their members, and informed the **Majlis** that they could mobilise 2,000 armed men at any time. Eventually, the **Majlis** could not act without the approval of the **Anjumans** or the press. When the policies of the **Shāh** became more aggressive, the people and the **Anjumans** wished to fight, but incurred the disapproval

1. Lambton, *op. cit.*, p.50.

2. Kasravi, A., *Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭiyat-i Īrān*, pp.159-165, 176.

of the deputies, who doubted the strength of the Nationalists.¹ The failure of the **Majlis** was probably due to the divisions among the deputies which were exploited by the Shāh.

To summarize, then: the reason for the later development of the **anjuman** into a political party, was its organisation, for it was the obvious prototype of a political party, especially during times of representative government. However, the political 'party' in the full sense, which emerged during the period of representative government, 1905-25, owed its genesis not to Iranian representation but to Russian and later Soviet influence. This was in the form of the Russian Social Democratic Party, which, unlike any other party, had its origins in Baku, before its influence extended to Iran and the organisation began to take effect there.

Prologue to the Coup of February 1921:

The period between 1905 and 1921 was one of political and economic turmoil in Iran. Intense political activity derived from the granting of Constitutional Law in 1905:² while it was enthusiastically received by the populace, especially in Azerbaijan, it came into increasing disrepute with the new Shāh, Muhammad ^cAlī Shāh. A power struggle thus ensued between the monarchy and central government, and the Constitutionalists, fought right through to 1911. Hostility between East and West centring on each of their individual concerns was of no great importance to the Constitutionalists. Tension was rather caused in Iran itself through the unwanted presence of any foreign influence in the country, although it centred quite naturally on Britain and Russia.³ Both of these powers were seeking concessions

1. Dawlatābādī, op. cit., pp.278-80.

2. Lockhart, L, "The Constitutional Laws of Persia", MEJ, vol.13 1959, passim.

3. Keddīe, N.R., "The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change 1800-1969: An Overview", ME Studies 2 (1971), p.7.

from Iran, particularly on oil, and the populace was growing increasingly restive with a government that had neither the capability to restore economic health to Iran nor the determination to promote the rights of her own citizens in the face of foreign pressure.

These two sources of discontent, deriving from the relation between the central government and foreign powers, induced a rash of revolutionary movements within Iran whose main goals constituted the removal of foreign influence and intervention in Iran, the abolition of Iran's feudal system, and the institution of comprehensive reforms.

The nineteenth century in Iran saw a deepening complexity of society which both reflected and effected a general growth of political awareness amongst the population. The Qajar dynasty, while still claiming to be all-powerful Kings of Kings, was in the process of losing its absolute power among different sections of Iranian society. Provincial magnates had immense power, since the Shāhs controlled neither bureaucracy nor armies in their provinces.¹ Two new classes also emerged in society: a united middle-class developed gradually out of the lesser clergy and petit bourgeoisie, and a new intelligentsia which welcomed and encouraged Westernisation grew out of the modernisation of the Iranian education system.² The power of the monarchy was thus being disintegrated, and assumed by groups within society anxious not to further their own careers but the democratic, and thereby stable and confident, state of Iran.

The first manifestation of this political mobilisation came in the "**Tobacco Régie**", in 1892,³ where a popular ban on

1. Abrahimiyan, E., "Oriental Despotism: The Case of Qajar Iran", *International Journal of ME Studies*, IV, 1 Jan. 1974, pp.3-31.

2. Bill, J., *Politics of Iran*, passim., US 1972.

3. Avery, P., *Modern Iran*, NY Praeger, 1965, p.95ff.

smoking forced the cancellation of the tobacco concession given by the government to Britain. Successive proposed concessions were thereafter blocked through the deployment of this newly found popular voice and will, all of which incidents served to strengthen the people's political resolve.

Therefore, with the co-operation of the middle class and intelligentsia, the Constitutional Law was eventually won from Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh through the Revolution fought in 1905.¹ The Revolution was supported by the guilds, and by wealthy merchants, religious authorities and intellectual Western-educated people.² Thus, in December 1905, a group took refuge in a mosque in Teheran to protest against the victimization of two sugar merchants by the government in an attempt to lower sugar prices.³ The bāzār went on strike in support, and their protest was also supported by a group of religious leaders who took Bast (sanctuary) in Shāh 'Abd al-Āzīm together with their families, and by theology students financed by a dealer and several merchants. The crisis was intensified through the unexpected participation of the guilds, which previously had only ever given limited support to groups such as the clergy.⁴ Further demonstrations took place, and the British Consulate in Teheran was also occupied as a place of refuge.⁵ Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh was subsequently compelled to grant a Constitutional Law in the face of these and other financial disturbances, so weak was his power.⁶

1. Ābrahāmiyan, E., 'The Crowd in Iranian Politics 1950-53', Past and Present 41, December 1968, p.192; Browne, E., The Persian Revolution of 1905-9 (CUP 1910), pp.167-168.

2. Ābrahāmiyan, 'Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)', ME Studies, p.192.

3. Ābrahāmiyan, 'Crowd in Iranian Politics', op. cit., p.185.

4. Ābrahāmiyan, 'Factionalism in Iran', op. cit.

5. Ābrahāmiyan, 'Crowd in Iranian Politics', op. cit., p.186.

6. For more details, see Ābrahāmiyan, E., 'The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran', ME Studies 10 (1979), passim.

Despite this triumph, the Constitutionalists had only just begun to encounter problems. Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh's successor, his son Muhammad ^CAlī Shāh, objected strongly to the limits imposed upon the power of the monarch by the Constitutional Law, especially as regards the provinces. He therefore embarked upon a campaign towards its annulment, further antagonising the situation by sacrificing Iranian interests to those of Czarist Russia in his attempt to favour landowners.¹

In response, an attempt to assassinate Muhammad ^CAlī Shāh was made in 1908 by Āzādīkhwāhān, under orders from Haydar Khān Amughlī.² In June, the Shāh with his Iranian Cossacks, under Russian officers, bombarded and dissolved the Majlis.³ Strong resistance ensued, with the conflict between Royalists and Constitutionalists lasting until the autumn of 1909. The victory went to the Constitutionalists, who deposed Muhammad ^CAlī Shāh and put his son Ahmad on the throne under a regent. Muhammad ^CAlī Shāh was exiled to Odessa, apart from one brief and unsuccessful attempt to regain his throne.⁴

Political diversity and development steadily increased during the whole period. The Majlis itself divided into 3 factions: the Mu^Ctadilīn, the Āzādīkhwāhān and the Bītarafān (neutrals). The first of these was generally conservative, and the second variously called Nationalist, liberal, extremist and revolutionary; this extremism was active, and manifested itself, for example, in the assassination of Atābak. The division between the deputies was not a class difference but rather a difference of interest.

1. Razi, *op. cit.*, p.63.

2. Jawdat, H., *Az Sadr-i Mashrūṭīyat tā Inqilāb-i Safīd*, Teheran 1970, p.12.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 12; Razi, *op. cit.*, p.64.

4. 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', (no author), *Central Asian Review* 4, 1956, p.300.

Outwith the **Majlis**, political awareness was being mobilised into organised structures. Three main parties developed out of the **anjuman** system: the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, the Moderates (**Mu^ctadilīn**), and the smaller Alliance and Progress Party. The minority **Dimūkrāts** were more influential than the larger **Mu^ctadilīn**, so the balance of power remained precarious.

Support for the **Dimūkrāts** was basically proletarian in character, coming particularly from the **Anjumans** in Tabriz, from Iranian Turks, and from the anti-Royalist **Mujāhidīn**, mainly in Baku.¹ The **Mu^ctadilīn** comprised pro-Constitutionalist **Bakhtiyārī Khāns** and tribesmen, conservative clergy, and landed gentry and was of an upper class nature.² Iran thus seemed to be moving towards a constitutional and electoral monarchy - the first committee to supervise elections was in fact favoured by the Tabriz **Anjumans**, immediately after the Constitution was granted.³

Despite this apparent success, the parties floundered because of the collaboration, necessitated by Germany's rising power, between Britain and Russia over the Conventional Treaty of August 31, 1907.⁴ As a result of this treaty, Iran was split into three zones: the North, under the influence of Russia, the South dominated by Britain, while the centre of the country was under the influence of both.⁵ The Czarist government sought to return **Muhammad^c Alī Shāh** to power, by provoking counter-

1. Jawdat, op. cit., p.26; M. Malik Zada, op. cit., p.40.

2. Jawdat, op. cit., pp.26-7.

3. Razi, op. cit., pp.64-5.

4. Jawdat, op. cit., p.27; cf. M. Shuster, The Strangling of Persia, NY 1920, pp.xxiv-xxviii; Razi, op. cit., p.65.

5. Churchill, R.P., The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 1939. For more details, see the following pages.

revolutionary activity in Iran, and in December 1911, they finally suppressed the remaining Constitutionalist strongholds in Tabriz, Rasht, Anzalī and finally Mashhad in 1912.¹ It was unable wholly to suppress the movement, however, which was also supported, although somewhat ambiguously, by Britain.²

Earlier in 1911, Āzādīkhvāhān decided to employ American financial advisers, partly because of the failure of Belgian officials, partly because of the geographical isolation of the United States, which precluded the temptation of territorial expansion, and partly to counter-balance Russian and British influence. Thus a request was made through the Iranian embassy for trusted financial advisers.³ Morgan Shuster led the group of five financiers appointed in 1911, to whom the Majlis gave wide powers covering revenue and expenditure. A Russian ultimatum at this time demanded Shuster's dismissal, compensation for the Russian army, and a guarantee that appointments of foreign advisers would be notified to Russia and Britain.

These demands incited the fury of the masses, whose slogan, "Death or Independence", challenged this threat to the very existence of Iranian sovereignty. Upon the Majlis' rejection of this ultimatum, both Russia and Britain moved forces into the area. As revolutionary forces were engaging the Czarists in Tabriz, Rasht and Mashhad, the Iranian reactionaries, capitalising on the Russian and British concern, effected a coup d'état in December of that year. Aided by detachments under the control of Yefrem Khan the Dashnak, and the Bakhtiyārīs, they seized the Majlis building and dissolved Parliament, so that the Qājār reactionary aristocracy re-assumed power.

1. Old. ed. of Soviet Encyclopedia, art. 'Persiya', vol.45, 1940.

2. Jawdat, op. cit., p.10; Razi, op. cit., p.65.

3. Jawdat, op. cit., pp.29-31.

The government then accepted the Russo-British ultimatum; Shuster was dismissed on December 25, 1911, and left Iran on January 11, 1912.¹

This reconciliation between the Moderates and foreign powers was a setback both for the *Dimūkrāts* and for representative government. A number of liberal leaders fled the country, and the *Majlis* was suspended for 3 years, only recovering in November 1914, after the coronation of Ahmad Shāh, when it regained its leading role.² It was further dissolved again in November 1915, after an attempt to set up a pro-German government in Qum.³ Between this event and the sitting of the fourth *Majlis* in June 1921, neither the Liberals nor Nationalists, reputedly honest, participated in Cabinets, since the latter were said to be under either British or Russian influence. The British regarded the *Dimūkrāts* as extremists, who fought intermittently against Russia, Britain and the Iranian government, aided occasionally by Germany and Turkey.

Importantly, the end of the Third *Majlis* saw the final collapse of co-operation between the Moderates and *Dimūkrāts*, due to the collaboration of the former group with foreign powers. The Moderates were accused of treachery and betrayal of the true nationalists in order to gain power over central government.

Concurrently with the rise of these parties, and in direct response to the presence of foreign powers in Iran and their influence over the central government, together with the economic decay within the country, a series of revolutionary movements arose. Various Communist or nationalist according

1. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p.198ff.

2. Razi, *op. cit.*, p.66.

3. Avery, *op. cit.*, pp.185-8; Malik Zāda, *op. cit.*, vol.4.

to the majority of historians, it may be maintained that all were in fact nationalist, since support from an external source does not necessarily indicate domination by that source (e.g. Soviet support for the Tudeh Party) and all were anti-foreign. Through analysing these movements, we shall attempt to substantiate and demonstrate this fact.

Uprisings in Azerbaijan:

Azerbaijan had consistently supported the idea of a strong Iranian government, able and willing to promote the interests of Iranians instead of those of foreign powers. When the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution resulted in the withdrawal of the Russians, who had occupied the country under the reactionary puppet, Shujā^c al-Dawla, the Azerbaijanis increased their efforts towards achieving these aims.

In December 1917, a Tabrizi group demanded the removal of the pro-Russian governor of Azerbaijan, the return of anti-Russian political exiles, and the holding of parliamentary elections. The weak Teheran government neither responded to this demand, nor tried to fill the political vacuum created by the Russian withdrawal. Consequently, Shaykh Muḥammad Khiyābānī (1879-1920) was able to take power.¹

Khiyābānī was an eloquent middle-class politician who had taken part in the revolution of 1908-9, and who had been arrested in the first World War by the Ottomans and deported to Kars. As one of the Liberal Nationalist faction in the Majlis, and a Dimūkrāt, Khiyābānī was regarded by his supporters as a democrat and Iranian patriot, not linked to any ideas of Azerbaijan

1. 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', op. cit., pp.303-313.

separatism.¹ Nor did he encourage foreign intervention, and in fact rejected the help of Russia and Turkey, preferring instead to introduce his own style of government, which encouraged individual responsibility within the community.²

On April 10, 1920, Khīyābānī broke openly with Teheran over the 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty. The Dimūkrāts subsequently expelled the governor, occupied government offices, and established a National Committee, for the welfare of the people. Various cities, including Urūmiyya and Zanjān³ came under this Committee, which was strongly republican and anti-imperialist, and wanted reforms, autonomy for Azerbaijan, and improvement of relations with the Soviet Union.

This opposition to the 1919 Treaty caused the downfall of Vusūq al-Dawla's Cabinet on June 25, 1920. Dawla was replaced by the nationalist feudal lord, Mushīr al-Dawla, who was obliged to declare the treaty null and void until it received ratification from the Majlis. Ivanov⁴ points out that the new government was opposed to the British policy of open dictatorship, and sought better links with the Soviet Union. It wanted also to calm down the situation in Azerbaijan by negotiating with Khīyābānī, who claimed that "the will of the people must be above everything. If it so wishes, it must even overthrow the Shāh, and if it so wishes and considers necessary, declare a republic".⁵ Khīyābānī also believed in the strength of local rather than national government, and promoted the idea of a people's paper (his own was Tajaddud, Revival), to protect them from the absolute control of a strong central government.

1. Avery, *op. cit.*, p.219; Makkī, Tārīkh-i Bīst Sāla-yi Īrān, Teheran 1945-7, vol.I, p.16; ^cAbd Allāh Mustawfī, Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭiyya.

2. Ivanov, Tārīkh-i Nuvīn-i Īrān, p.37.

3. 'Tabriz Uprising in 1920', (anon) 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', Central Asian Review 6, 1958, p.439.

4. Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p.37.

5. Y. Āryān Pūr, Az Šabā Tā Nīmā, vol.2, Teheran 1972, p.211.

Mushīr al-Dawla proceeded to advance on Tabriz, but he was resisted and forced to retreat. A new governor, Mukhbīr al-Saltāna was dispatched to Tabriz, and on his arrival began fruitless talks with Khīyābānī, which only lasted a few days. This was long enough, however, to enable him to unite his reactionary forces and make a surprise attack against the divided and disorganised Dimūkrāts in their own homes on September 4. Khīyābānī and many others were killed, Khīyābānī himself being arrested and put to death;¹ under Saltāna's command, more than three hundred families were killed, their property seized and houses destroyed.²

Ivanov³ suggests that this revolutionary movement had two major weaknesses: one, the failure to arm itself, and second, its failure to disarm the Cossacks. These two factors, linked to the absence of land reforms and neglect of conditions of the proletariat, demonstrates the movement's underestimation of the masses. Ivanov's further claim, however, that Khīyābānī probably did not understand the importance of a broad popular front of support, is spurious, for Khīyābānī had neither the time nor the finance to arm the masses.⁴ The night preceding ^{Mukhbīr al-} Saltāna's attack, Khīyābānī had sent his 200 best fighters to aid the Shāhsavan tribesmen against Arshad, who was rebelling in Ahar, with the result that he lacked sufficient military strength to counter the offensive of September 4.⁵ Furthermore, an assault launched very early in the morning

1. See Y. Āryān Pūr, op. cit., p.214, and for more details, Āzarī, A. Shaykh Muḥammad Khīyābānī, Teheran 1950.

2. 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', op. cit., p.441; see Ra'īsniyā, R., Nahīd, Du Mubārīz-i Junbish-i Mashruṭa, Tabriz 1967, p.308.

3. Ivanov, op. cit., p.38.

4. A. Sulṭānzāda, Asnād-i Tārīkh-i Junbish-i Kārgari va Sūsiyāl Dimūkrāt va Kumūnistī-yi Īrān, Paris 1973, vol.4, p.94.

5. K. Tāhirzāda, Qiyām-i Āzarbāyjan Dar Inqilāb-i Mashruṭiyyat, Teheran 1953, pp.505-6.

allowed him no time to unite.¹

After this crushing defeat, the movement struggled for existence for a period in Ahar, and the fighting was continued in these difficult mountainous regions by a band led by Qiyāmī called the Qiyāmiyyūn va-Intiqāmiyyūn (Revenge Insurgents).² Two years later, Azerbaijan broke once again with Teheran. Again, it was not an issue of separatism: this time Rīzā Khān was attempting to bring the gendarmerie under his control. The gendarmes, in conjunction with the Āzādīkhwāhān, rose in opposition to the central government following the expulsion of the Dimūkrāts, Āzādīkhwāhān and I^c tidāliyyūn by Nāṣir al-Mulk. They finally revolted on February 1, 1922, together with the Dimūkrāts, supporters of Khiyābānī, and some of the gendarmes. The latter were under the leadership of Lāhūtī Khān,³ a man who had fled the death penalty in Qum and taken up a post in the Azerbaijan gendarmerie under Maḥmūd Khān Fūlādī in 1922 (1300).

After occupation of government offices, Khiyābānī's followers set up a National Committee, demanding British withdrawal, the expulsion of Rīzā Khān from the Ministry of War, payment by the central government of the gendarmes, and the institution of reforms.⁴

Opposition to Rīzā Khān had the effect of providing recruits among the revolutionary movements in Azerbaijan

1. A. Āzarī, op. cit., p.492.

2. 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', op. cit., p.441.

3. Lāhūtī Khān and his father were both poets, and were active in Azerbaijan.

4. Bahār, op. cit., pp.170, 176; Jawdat, op. cit., p.105.

directed towards strengthening resistance against Riżā Shāh. These forces did in fact defeat the Iranian Army, which could hold only Bāgh-i Shāh. Command was subsequently taken over by Habīb Allāh Khān-i Shaybānī, an influential gendarmerie officer who persuaded Mahmūd Khān-i Fūlādī to withdraw his support from Lāhūtī.¹

Shaybānī began hopeless talks with Lāhūtī upon his appointment, and war followed their inevitable collapse. Astonishingly Lāhūtī then defected to the Soviet Union upon the verge of victory, and left his army without a leader or instructions.² The resultant breakdown of morale within the national army was more than likely the cause of its ultimate defeat: the Iranian Army entered Tabriz on February 7, 1922, looting the town, and arrested and tried many of the members of the movement, and the revolt was suppressed.

The two revolutionary movements in Azerbaijan were suppressed through internal pressure exerted by Teheran, from where the central government tried to prevent the dissemination of revolutionary ideas, but also by external sources. It is rumoured that the British stopped all movement and relations between Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, bribed clergy to help suppress the revolution, and spread false rumours about repression in Soviet Azerbaijan.³ They furthermore organised private forces through Iran as a whole and Azerbaijan in particular.

Thus, the revolts may not have brought autonomous government to Azerbaijan, but they did achieve the collapse of the Cabinet of Vuṣūq al-Dawla and the cancellation of the 1919

1. Bahār, op. cit., pp.171-3; Jawdat, op. cit., pp.105-6.

2. Jawdat, op. cit., p.106.

3. 'The 1917-20 Uprising in Persian Azerbaijan', 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', op. cit., p.440.

agreement. The consequent close ties with the Soviet Union resulted then in the 1921 agreement of February 26. Despite its suppression, the revolution was not rooted out totally, and indeed 25 years later, it took the first opportunity offered, under the leadership of Ja^cfar Pīshavarī in 1945, to rise up once again. These events will be discussed fully below in Chapter 6.

Muḥammad Taqī Khān-i Pisyān:

Another revolutionary movement arose in the province of Khurāsān, under the leadership of Muḥammad Taqī Khān-i Pisyān, in 1921.

Khurāsān and its capital Mashhad had not previously played a large part in the Constitutional Revolution; although the province was big and was economically independent, the social base for nationalism and autonomy was weak. Demands for reform, better governors, and independence from foreign influence were made in Bahār, the liberal nationalist newspaper published in Mashhad yet no organised movement was ever set up as happened in Azerbaijan to work towards autonomy.

The governor of Khurāsān between 1919-20 was Ahmad Qavām, who worked with the liberal nationalist element in the province, energetically tackling the problems caused by the depredation of tribes and bandits. With Sayyid Żiyā's coup d'état in 1921, Qavām lost his influence and position due to his criticism of the new régime. Żiyā subsequently gave orders to Pisyān, as commander of the Khurāsān gendarmerie, to arrest Qavām and bring him to Teheran. Pisyān executed the orders and took over Qavām's post as acting governor. He was later appointed as commander of the Khurāsān army by

1. Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, Univ. of Pittsburgh 1964, p.107.

Ahmad Shāh. Future developments moved quickly to change the situation, and Sayyid Żiyā was within a few weeks replaced by Qavām himself, who naturally held no sympathy for Pisyān, and the scene was set for a collision course between the two men.

Pisyān's activities coincided with Iran's most turbulent era. 1921 was a watershed in modern Iranian history, with a complex of factors bringing matters to a head: general insecurity and confusion, incompetent leadership, and foreign intervention. On July 7, 1921, Pisyān received instructions from Ahmad Shāh forbidding him to intervene in national affairs. Two days later, he received a further telegram, confirming the premiership of Qavām al-Saltāna.

Qavām's official appointment led him to take a firmer line over internal affairs, and his arrest and exile of certain influential people and attempted control of Khurāsānī matters led largely to the uprising.¹ Pisyān feared reprisals by Qavām after the coup of 1921, but he had strong support among the Khurāsānī people. The populace chose a commission of six to dictate a telegram to the central government presenting Pisyān's case,² laid out in the following points:

1. the budgetary status of the gendarmes should not change.
2. the gendarmerie's promotion ladder should operate as previously.
3. Qavām al-Saltāna's horses and ammunition belonged to the gendarmerie even though the former carried his emblem, and should not therefore be reclaimed by Qavām.
4. Pisyān should be given two years paid leave in order

1. H. Makki, Tārīkh-i Bīst Sāla-yi Īrān, vol.1, Teheran 1949, p.

2. Malik-Zāda, Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Mashrūta-yi Īrān (Teheran 1919), p.357; Makki, op. cit., vol.I.

to complete his studies abroad.

5. He should be escorted to the border by gendarmes.

6. The Belgian financial advisor, dismissed by the central government, should be re-instated.¹

These conditions were accepted by the Shāh, with the exception of permission for Pisyān to travel abroad. Pisyān agreed, and released one of those arrested in order to make him governor in his place.

The situation in Khurāsān was meanwhile rapidly deteriorating. Societies known as 'national committees' sprang up in Mashhad publishing tirades against Teheran and the Prime Minister, as well as Najm al-Saltāna, governor of Khurāsān. At this point, the government realised the precarious situation in Khurāsān, and the danger of its imminent fall into the hands of Pisyān. Šamsām al-Saltāna was therefore chosen to govern the province. The appointment was resisted by Pisyān's supporters, who requested his re-instatement as Commander of the Khurāsāni forces.

Pisyān regained his influence once again in August 1922, with the dismissal of his opponent Shawkat al-Mulk. Pisyān reappointed the Belgian financial advisor to the Khurāsān treasury, and various other government officials, including Col. Gillerup² were sent back to Teheran, disarmed. In control of the provincial government and gendarmerie, Pisyān resisted the pressure of the central government, and gained general popularity as an educated man who neither took part in local conflicts nor collaborated with foreign powers.³

1. M. Bahār, Tārīkh-i Mukhtaṣar-i Ahzāb-i Siyāsī, pp.145-6.

2. A Swede, who was sent by the central government to take control of the wayward Khurāsān gendarmerie.

3. Bahār, op. cit., p.149; Y Āryān Pūr Az Šabā Ta Nīmā, vol.2, Teheran 1972, p.352.

Pisyān's objective was autonomy for Khurāsān not, as was commonly supposed, to attack Teheran and seize control of the central government. It seems that Pisyān could have seized Teheran with relative ease, since he had 8,000 trained men, against a badly organised government force of fewer than a thousand.¹ The central government instigated serious measures against Pisyān, provoking Khurāsān's tribes against him, with the result that 5,000 mounted guerillas were soon headed towards Mashhad, but Pisyān successfully defeated the force before it reached Mashhad.²

Qūchān and Turbat Haydariyya rose against Pisyān and he left Mashhad to crush them leaving Mahmūd Khān Nawzarī in command. Pisyān then arrived at Qūchān with the gendarmes and at Ja^cfarābād half the gendarmes were killed and the other half fled. Pisyān fought bravely but was killed.³ Mahmūd Khān Nawzarī reported the incident to the central government and was made governor, temporarily, of Khurāsān. Although the movement had been suppressed, Major Ismā^cīl Khān-Bahādurī rose in an attempt to avenge Pisyān but was defeated and exiled.⁴

Gīlān Movement 1918-1922:

Gīlān was a likely area for a local nationalist movement, being separated from the Iranian plateau and Teheran by the Alburz mountain range and was distinct geographically,

1. Bahār, op. cit., p.155.

2. Ibid.

3. Makkī, op. cit., pp.275-300. A. Āzarī, op. cit., p.503.

4. Bahār, op. cit., p.157ff.

economically and linguistically and had a large enough middle class to support such a movement.¹

The formation of a brief rebellious Provincial Government in Kirmānshāh was followed in Gīlān by armed insurrection organised by young **Mashrūṭa** revolutionaries headed by Mīrzā Kūchik Khān, who was a Shi'ite Muslim and patriot of remarkable fighting qualities and who was an incorruptible leader. His intention was to free the country from external and internal corruption.² He drew up a plan of national reform with a group of sympathetic men in Teheran in 1915. It called for National independence, social reform and Islamic unity.³

By 1918, the **Jangalī** movement of the lower classes was calling for agrarian reform and by 1920 the Provisional Revolutionary movement of Kūchik Khān pledged to ensure republicanism, personal freedom, the dismantling of unilateral foreign agreements, sexual and ethnic equality, and the defence of Islam.⁴ To safeguard Iranian strength, the **Jangalīs** originally announced their intention to fight the Russian, British and even German-Turkish⁵ forces as well as internal bands of tribesmen and robbers. In 1918, although the British invasion overcame resistance in Anzalī, Soviet-Iranian friendship societies were formed in Rasht and Anzalī. Upon Russo-British fighting, Kūchik had four options: fight everyone, no-one, the Russians or the British.⁶ The extreme communist Iḥsān Allāh Khān persuaded him to support

1. Cottam, 1964 op. cit., pp.102-3.

2. Ibid., p.103. Katouzian, H., 'Nationalist Trends in Iran 1921-26', I.J.M.E.S. 10 (1979), pp.533-551.

3. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, op. cit., p.54. Fatemi, Diplomatic History of Persia (NY 1952), p.219.

4. Jangal, 6 July, 1920.

5. Mostawfi, op. cit. III g. Dawlatābādī IV, 143.

6. Cottam, op. cit., p.105.

the Russian forces, although he was not very enthusiastic.

On 4th June, 1920, Kūchik Khān and his 2,000 men took Rasht, proclaiming Gīlān a Republic. As promised earlier that year, the Soviets landed at Anzālī, putting the British to flight, and inspired strength in the national liberation movement.

Ivanov divides the existence of the Republic into three stages. From May to July, 1920, Kūchik's government localised the movement, ending with the withdrawal of his troops to a forest. From July to October the coalition between Kūchik Khān and Ihsān Allāh Khān disintegrated and on July 31st, a new government came into existence in Gīlān led by Ihsān Allāh Khān. His followers and those of Sultān-Zāda constituted the National Committee for the Liberation of Persia, but the failure of that Revolutionary movement ultimately passed the leadership of the movement to the Persian Communist Party in October 1920. Its leader, Haydar Khān, decided to unite all revolutionary feeling¹ gradually and therefore limited action to agrarian reform. By the 8th May, 1921, an agreement was reached between Haydar Khān, Kūchik and the Gīlān government leaders and the Communists, so that on 4th August, 1921, Gīlān was declared a Soviet Republic.² The weakness of the movement was such that independence was never actually demanded, the state calling itself the "Persian Soviet Socialist Republic".³ Kūchik capitulated to the Teheran government of Vuṣūq al-Dawla in January, 1922, but rebellion re-appeared in May, 1922.

Ivanov explains the failure of this movement as being due to the repressive measures of the Teheran government and British aid; and to the lack of a country-wide front - a factor caused by

1. For more details of Haydar Khān, see A.R. Sheikh Gulami and E. Wilson, 'The Memoirs of Haydar Khan', Iranian Studies, Winter, 1973.

2. 'Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia', Central Asian Review, vol.4, 1956, Persia, Part I.

3. Ibid., p.312.

the impossibility of communication with the National Liberation movements of Azerbaijan and Khurāsān. Also ideological and personal differences amongst leaders overshadowed the principal aim of establishing an anti-British movement, and the compromise sought between Ihsān Allāh Khān and Kūchik Khān¹ was fraught with difficulties. Teheran and Britain further discredited the movement by implying Soviet dependence, ^{although} and ^{fact} indeed actual Soviet support failed to appear. With these in mind, we should look deeper for the reasons for the internal disunity allowing the above factors to take their toll.

Shaykh Khaz^cal of Muḥammara:

Before the days of Riṣā Shāh, Khūzistān, an important oil province, caused problems to the central government despite its position as the main centre of foreign trade. Bad communications meant that little control could be kept over the Shaykh of Muḥammara who resented paying taxes to the central government and who was eventually in direct confrontation with it. He had, early in the century,³ sold land, including Ābādān island, to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in return for scanty assurances of his own safe position. But his autonomy was not safeguarded against Riṣā Shāh in 1924, who, despite popular

1. Laqueur, W.Z., The Soviet Union and Middle East, London 1959, p.30.

2. Ibid., p.31.

3. For this period cf. inter alia A. Wilson, S.W. Persia: A Political Officer's Diary 1907-1914, London, 1941; Waterfield, G., Professional Diplomat, London, 1975; Graves, P., The Life of Sir Percy Cox, London, 1941; Potter, L., 'The Relationship of Sheikh Khazal with the Persian Government and British Government', unpublished M.A. dissertation, SOAS, 1971.

suspicion, had British support. However there was no sign at first of Arab nationalist¹ leanings, despite the Arabic tongue of the area, although embryonic nationalism did appear with an increasing awareness by the people of their position, and the feeling grew with the arrival of Persian-speaking oil workers.²

However from the very beginning of the rise to power of Riṣā Khān, Shaykh Khaz^Cal recognised the threat to his position from him and thence proceeded to protect himself, firstly by recruiting support from the tribal chiefs of the Lur, Bakhtiārī and Khamsa tribes, in opposition to Riṣā Khān,³ and secondly by strengthening his relationship with Ahmad Shāh.⁴ Finally he allied himself to the Majlis opposition but all these ploys ended in failure.⁵ Also he sought to enlist British support and styled himself the defender of Islam against Riṣā Shāh's secularism.⁶ However as central government began to consolidate Britain withdrew her support from the Shaykh and transferred it to Riṣā Shāh, thus destroying Khaz^Cal's separatist ambitions for Khūzistān.

Shaykh Khaz^Cal's lengthy rule was due to a combination of an ignorant local populace, a weak central government, geographic isolation and foreign, that is British, interference. As soon as the British withdrew their support for the Shaykh, Riṣā Khān launched a three-pronged military attack, and Khūzistān was subdued in a matter of hours, with almost no

1. Cottam, *op. cit.*, 1964.

2. Cronin, S.M., 'Industrial Agitation and Tribal Unrest in South Iran, 1946', unpub. M.A. dissertation, London, 1981, p.17.

3. Mustawfī, *op. cit.* vol.IV, p.478. Vincent Sheehan, *The New Persia*, (NY 1927), pp.47-48.

4. Mustawfī, *op. cit.*, p.474. Makki, *op. cit.*, III, p.179.

5. *Ibid.*, pp.158-80.

6. *Ibid.*, p.244.

loss of life.¹ The integration of Khūzistān into Iran together with further development of oil fields and the growth in size and importance of port and refinery centres such as Khurramshahr and Ābādān, developed political awareness and a sense of national identity among the inhabitants of Khūzistān,² although there was a further rising there in 1946.³

In conclusion, for Iran, the growth of a virile Arab nationalism has proved problematic. Due to this predominance of Arabic-speaking Khūzistānīs and also on account of the huge oil reserves, the threat of separation remains ever-present.

All revolutionary movements which had formed throughout Iran between 1918 and 1922 were more anti-Imperialist than pro-proletarian by nature. Their major weakness however was their geographical dispersion and a lack of communication with each other. Hence the reactionary central government was able to suppress these outbursts one at a time. The movements may not have destroyed the feudal system and halted Imperialism in the short term, but they did prepare the ground for the defeat of the Qājār dynasty and, together with the Bolshevik Revolution in the Soviet Union, proved a severe setback to British interests in Iran.* However Rizā Shāh's rise to power re-established Britain's Iranian interests and suppressed revolutionary movements. After his abdication in 1941, several such movements re-appeared, for example the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt and Kumala-yi Kurdistan, the latter to be discussed in Chapter II, and the former in Chapters IV to VI.

1. Mustawfī, op. cit., vol.IV, p.470; Makki, op. cit., III, pp.260-77; The Near East, Dec. 25, 1925, pp.658; Jan. 22, 1925, p.87.

2. Cottam, O.S., op. cit., p.114.

3. Cf. Chapter VI.

4. Ivanov, Tārīkh-i Nuvīn-i Īrān, pp.52-55.

Riżā Shāh's Dictatorship (1921-41)

"The war ended with Russia in revolution, Turkey powerless and Iran largely destroyed."¹

The success of the October 1917 revolution in the Soviet Union was coupled with revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements within Iran and among some of her neighbours, such as Turkey and Afghanistan. These movements, together with a popular discontent over the 1919 Treaty, persuaded the British to bring about a much more radical² administration; a move which had three probable intentions - to safeguard British interests in Iran, to suppress the revolutionary atmosphere and to keep Communism at bay.³ This was initially effected by the formation of a top secret "committee of steel",⁴ chaired by Sayyid Żiyā⁵ and Nusrat Allāh-i Fīrūz. This coup d'état, according to Makki,⁶ was masterminded in London. At this stage it was decided to include Riżā Khān in the scheme; he was at this point a colonel in the Cossack Brigade and was forthwith promoted by Ironside to the rank of Commander-in-chief of that brigade. Armed with this new power, Riżā Khān marched his force (which was secretly considerably supported by British influences⁷) from Qazvīn to Teheran on 21st February, 1921, and carried out a virtually bloodless coup.⁸

1. London Times, 26 Aug., 1941, Special Article on Riza Shah.

2. Ivanov, op. cit., p.43.

3. Tabari, Jāmi'a-yi Īrān Dar Dawra-yi Riżā Shāh, Teheran 1976, p.52.

4. Ivanov, op. cit., p.46; Avery, op. cit., p.224.

5. Editor of the newspaper Ra'id, which was pro-British. He favoured the Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1919, as can be seen in his Russian article called the 'Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 9.8.1919', published in the spring of 1920 in Baku. See Sultān-Zāda, Asnād-i Tārīkhī-yi Junbish-i Kārgarī, Sūsiyāl-Dimūkrāt va Kumunīstī-yi Īrān, 1973. vol.4, p.96.

6. Makki, op. cit., p.48.

7. Sultān-Zāda, op. cit.

8. Banani, A, 'The Modernisation of Iran - 1921-1941', Stanford Univ. Press, Ca., 1961, p.36.

Immediately after the coup, Sayyid Żiyā arrested about 200 officers and other influential people.¹

Riżā Khān, who was born into a military class and had enjoyed a military education, was trusted by the British and even seen by many as a British agent - partly on account of his opposition to Russian Communist infiltration.² At his rise to power in 1921, he was faced with an Iran in social, political and economic chaos, and in which the previous constitutional government had totally failed to achieve any domestic stability; in the towns the population was disgusted by the instability in the country and the consequent and frequent uprisings throughout Iran. These factors, added to a lack of reform and the continuation of foreign intervention, facilitated Riżā Khān's coup.³

After the coup, however, the country was governed by Sayyid Żiyā, a supporter of the British,⁴ and his administration was popularly known as the "black cabinet".⁵ A treaty was concluded with the Soviet Union on February 26th, 1921, a major consequence of which was the optimistic and grateful Iranian attitude towards the Russians - even Riżā Khan, in a newspaper article,⁶ praised the new relationship

1. Banani, *op. cit.*, p.40; Sultān-Zāda, *op. cit.*, vol.4, p.96.

2. 'Dictatorship of Riza Shah', *Central Asian Review*, vol.10, 1961, p.401; Cottam, R., *Nationalism in Iran*, p.193; *Sitāra-yi Īrān*, 26 Feb., 1922; Katouzian, M., 'National Trends in Iran 1921-26', *IJMES*, 1979, p.538; Wanner, J., Monograph No.47, 'Riza Shah's Regime and the Penetration of German Imperialism into Iran between 1934-41', p.129; BBC Radio 4, File of 5th October, 1982 (7.50 p.m.).

3. Riżā Shāh and Sayyid Żiyā disputed over who had led the coup. Whatever the truth is, it had been masterminded by Major General Ironside. Tulsiram, *The History of the Communist Movement in Iran*, Bhopal 1981, p.51.

4. Avery, *op. cit.*, p.223.

5. *Yak Şafha Az Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān*, 1954 (1323), p.57.

6. *Gulshan*, 26th June, 1921.

reached between the two nations. Despite all the optimism, Sayyid Żiyā was bent on subverting the treaty and to that end he failed to publish all the articles of the agreement. Partly due to this, and also because of the political hostility of Ahmad Shāh and his court, and to Rīzā Khān whose lack of support stemmed from fierce rivalry, Żiyā lacked popular support, a fact noted by the British; and he was replaced as prime minister by Qavām on 25th May, 1921. According to Banani,¹ Qavām was a friend of the British, whose spying against the Soviet Union he had facilitated during his governorship of Khurāsān. He was also backed by the clerics led by Mudarris. As in Żiyā's black cabinet, the administration of Qavām had two latent functions - to suppress internal revolutionary movements, and to undermine the Russo-Iranian relationship.² Again, because of the general unpopularity of these intentions and conflict with Rīzā Khān, this cabinet too fell, to be replaced by those of Mustawfī al-Mamālik and of Mushīr al-Dawla. The actions of the government of Mushīr al-Dawla betrayed its very poor pretence of anti-British, pro-Soviet sympathies, and Qavām was given the opportunity to return to power. This time, not only did he lack popular support, but at the same time as alienating British friendship, he encouraged good relations with the United States. At this juncture popular support was with Rīzā Khān who, on the surface at least, was showing himself patriotic to Iran and eager to establish good relations with the Soviet Union. However, at the same time he was presenting to the British an image of support for feudal capitalism, a desire to suppress internal revolutionary movements such as those in Azerbaijan and Gīlān and the ability to bring himself to power. In 1923, therefore, he arrested Qavām and gained the premiership from Ahmad Shāh and from there sought to

1. Qāsimī, Ṭarīkh-i Khānavādahā Dar Īrān, p.184.

2. Ivanov, op. cit., p.44.

consolidate and improve his general appeal by including within his cabinet nationalists such as Muṣaddiq and leftwingers from the social democrats including Sulaymān Mīrzā Iskandarī¹ and pressurised Aḥmad Shāh to travel to Europe. Meanwhile Rīzā Khān was supporting agitators who were demonstrating for the declaration of a republic² in Iran. Later, however, he became a bitter enemy of republicanism. By collaboration with the feudal upper classes, he gained their support in 1924 and then travelled to Qum, where he persuaded the clerics to grant him their support also. On his return from the Holy City of Qum on 31st March, 1924, he made a proclamation calling for an end to demonstrations and seeking united cooperation for internal reforms. In the same proclamation he called for support for the Monarchy, rather than Republicanism, and gave a convincing impression of being a staunch Muslim. Next he went to Parliament, asking them to grant him the post of commander-in-chief of all the armed forces. The Majlis was unwilling to grant him this power, since such a move would have been contrary to article 50 of the constitution and was opposed by the influential media; but they consented and by 14th February, 1925, Rīzā Khān had gained the powers he sought. His ambition was to become Shāh and, learning from the experiences of previous prime ministers, he realised that he must secure domestic support for this; he therefore created a party called Tajaddud (Revival Revolution), whose manifesto consisted of several promises to the people. These included:

1. The promise to give over government controlled lands to the people.
2. The promise of freedom for political parties.
3. The claim that all citizens were to be treated equally before the law.

1. Tabarī, op. cit., p.58.

2. Banani, op. cit., p.62; Qā'immaqāmī, Īrān-i Imruz, p.36.

Further, the party asked Parliament to abolish the Qājār dynasty.¹

However, after he had become Shāh and thus gained supreme power, he broke his word; seizing all the land for himself and banning political parties, he ruled the country personally, (his son succeeding in 1941), without recourse to Constitutional Law.

Further, in 1925 he abolished all workers' unions and arrested 800 union leaders.² He also arrested the communist party leaders and as a result the Communist party went underground. Rīzā Shāh pursued these anti-Communist policies because he feared Communist influence in opposition to his rule.³ On 21st October, 1925, the 5th Majlis abolished the Qājār dynasty on the recommendation of Tadayyun, the Speaker of the Majlis and provisional authority was handed to Rīzā Khān. In the interim he published a proclamation advocating the principles of Islam as well as a higher standard of living for the people as his guiding principles; some of the clergy believed him and called for popular support for his regime. In November, a Parliamentary election was announced but due to the suspicions of the majority of the population, the voting attendance was minimal. The list of deputies was drawn up by the Army Officers⁴ before the election was over, and on 12th December, 1925, the Majlis ratified Rīzā Khān's régime, a régime backed by feudal landlords and part of the clergy.⁵ In fact the régime brought few systematic changes and in effect, continued the status quo.

1. Īrān, 22 Jan., 1925.

2. S. Mānī, Tārīkhcha-yi Nahzat-i Kārgarī Dar Īrān, Teheran 1946, passim.

3. Tabarī, op. cit., pp.87-8.

4. Ibid., p.61.

5. Ivanov , op. cit., pp.66-7.

Upon Rīzā Khān's elevation to the position of Shāh, he concentrated on three major problems; the limitation in the power of the tribes and the clergy, and the strengthening of the army to effect his intentions.

Against the threat of the tribes, Rīzā Shāh answered by breaking their backs;¹ he forcibly resettled them, oppressed them, and quickly crushed various tribal uprisings.

Another possible threat was the very powerful clergy which he was determined to limit. He secularized the legal system² and removed the veil, restricting the movements of women, in effect. "On the 7th January, 1936, Iranian women were formally, ceremoniously, indiscriminately and forcibly unveiled."³ Religious meetings were suppressed by the gendarmerie, and pious foundations were seized.⁴ An attempt was made to abolish the religious calendar. These actions had two motives; the destruction of Shi'ism and the restriction of religious institutions. After his abdication many freedoms were restored, including the veil, although many of the better legal reforms were maintained. This clerical struggle was a major contributor to the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty.⁵

As an autocrat, Rīzā Shāh realized the need for an army⁶ capable of maintaining his power. The Iranian army he built

1. M.B. Hījāzī, Haqāy'iq-i Guftanī, 1945, p.27. See also Bill, J.A., 'Modernisation and Reform from Above: The Case of Iran', Journal of Politics, vol.32, 1970, p.30.

2. Saikal, The Rise and Fall of the Shah, Princeton Univ. Press, 1980. Keddie, N.R., 'Class Structure and Political Power in Iran Since 1796', Iranian Studies, vol.XI, 1978, p.314.

3. Katouzian, Political Economy of Modern Iran, p.126.

4. Keddie, N.R., 'Class Structure', op. cit., p.314.

5. For more details, see Cuyler Young, T., 'The Problems of Westernisation in Modern Iran', MEJ, vol.2, 1948, pp.54ff.

6. Qā'īmaqāmī, Īrān-i Imrūz, n.d.

was assembled on Western, rather than Soviet, principles; and conscription¹ was imposed during 1925. But despite the recruitment of new young officers, Rīzā Shāh's trust and dependence rested on older generals and the army, built to suppress internal trouble, was ineffective against external forces as demonstrated by its helplessness in the invasion of 1941.

After suppressing internal opposition Rīzā Shāh turned his attention to external problems. The Soviet attitude to Iran was increasingly favourable after the Bolshevik Revolution and the treaty concluded in 1921² established Iranian rights;³ however Rīzā Shāh did not altogether abide by its terms and ultimately violated it seriously by granting Northern oil concessions to the Royal Dutch Shell Company. An intended agreement with the American Company, Amiranian Oil, ultimately failed, mainly due to lack of communication within the U.S. administration.

Relations with Britain gradually worsened and the D'arcy concessions⁴ of 1901 decreased in importance as Germany came to replace Britain in Rīzā Shāh's priorities, although Britain capitulated and signed a new agreement on 29th April, 1933.⁵

In the Middle East, relations with Turkey and Afghanistan had previously been strained due to demarcation disputes and religious differences,⁶ but a series of treaties

1. Groseclose, E., Introduction to Iran, O.U.P. 1947, p.21. Tārīkh-i Artish-i Nuvīn, Government Publication, Teheran 1923.

2. See Tabarī, op. cit., p.60. Kumholm, The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East, P.U.P., 1980, p.183.

3. Frye, Richard, Iran, NY 1953, pp.72-3. Marlowe, J., Iran, London 1963, pp.39, 41. Lenczowski, G., Russia and the West in Iran 1918-48, Ithaca, NY, 1949, p.25.

4. For more details, cf. Gregory, L., The Shah and Persia, 1959.

5. Saikal, op. cit., p.24.

6. Groseclose, op. cit., p.142.

was executed, culminating in that of Sa'dābād¹ between Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan on 8th July, 1937, intended to resolve the Shaṭṭ al-^CArab conflict.

By the 1930s, Riṣā Shāh had established himself as an absolute ruler and tried to consolidate his position commercially by improving the tax system, liquidating capital assets, monopolising foreign trade and establishing a state bank,² to replace the existing British-controlled bank.

Riṣā Shāh thus planned to reduce the British influence which had placed him in power and was threatening to constrain his individual power, and a further step was taken with the assistance of Germany, a ready ally in an anti-British strategy. In the hiatus left by the American failure, German industry and commerce was introduced to the Iranian economy on an increasingly large scale and Germany became the main recipient of goods in Iran's export market in the pre-war years, winning 41½% of Iranian exports in contrast to Britain's 8%.

By 18th October, 1939, Germany's rising importance in Europe too was unquestionable and she had also established a secret Fifth Column within Iran. Encouraged by Germany's position, Riṣā Shāh entered into a clandestine³ agreement, which allotted her an increased measure of raw materials and the right to build a railway through Iran and to use Iranian airspace. By 1941 German bureaucratic penetration was widespread particularly⁴ in governmental institutions, and Germany furthermore commanded emissaries and agents,

1. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, Appendix 6, pp.225-229. London Times, 26th August, 1941, special article on the Shah.

2. Wanner, J., op. cit., p.130.

3. Ivanova, op. cit., p.93.

4. Ibid., p.91. London Times, 26th August, 1941.



especially in the north,¹ who were capable of perpetrating terrorist activities or sabotage operations in the Baku region of the USSR.

But in order to utilize Iranian territory fully, Germany was eager to persuade her new associate to enter World War II and voiced this proposal on 17th August, 1941. Despite the promise of arms, Iran claimed neutrality, which induced Germany to plan a military coup² within Iran, which would bring her policies into line. According to Amīnī,³ this coup was to be backed by a division of the Iranian army, led by Manūchihri, later called Āryānā. Since the invasion of Russia on 22nd June, 1941, Russia had warned Iran three times of the danger of German espionage activities - on 26th June, 19th July and 26th August.⁴ On 26th June, they signalled ~~the~~ the planned coup d'état, and on 19th July they reiterated their warning, adding a reminder of the existence of German agents in Iran, which threatened Russia and Iran herself, and on 16th August Russia and Great Britain handed a formal note to the Iranian government, demanding the suppression of German activity in Iran. In return they promised to respect Iranian independence, neutrality and integrity and to work towards developing friendly relations. They conceded that Iran might keep those few Germans who were doing genuinely important technological work and pledged to replace any forced to leave.

A week later Iran gave the following reply:⁵

"1. the number of German residents in Iran was no so great as pretended; it scarcely touched the figure of seven hundred;⁶

1. Ivanova, op. cit., p.91. London Times, 26th August, 1941. Tabarī, op. cit., p.150.

2. Miron Rezun, The Soviet Union and Iran, Geneva 1981, p.367.

3. For more details see Amīnī, Az Sivvum tā Bistupanjum-i Shahrivar.

4. London Times, 26th August, 1941. Ivanova, op. cit., p.92. Tabarī, op. cit., p.146. Rezun, op. cit.

5. Ramazani, R., Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-73, Univ. Press of Virginia, Charlottesville 1975, p.28.

6. According to Russian sources the number exceeded 3,000.

2 the Iranian government was sure they could not foment any fifth column activities; 3 Iran was reducing the number of foreign specialists in its employ anyway; and 4 the Iranian government believed that the expulsion of Germans from Iran without any logical reasons was against the neutrality of the country."

This reply was not wholly satisfactory, and after a week's attempt to persuade Iran to expel the Germans, they could not make Rīzā Shāh understand the immediate danger both for himself and for his allies, Russia and Britain. For many reasons, economic and strategic, Russia and Great Britain could no longer afford to allow the danger to develop unchecked; they had no choice but action.¹ So on 9 August a Russian ambassador met with Sir R. Bullard to discuss the proposed German coup (which had been envisaged for the period between 22 and 28 August). At 4 a.m. on 25th August, 1941, allied troops crossed the border and attacked Iran by sea, air and ground. The British entered at three points from the Persian Gulf to the Turkish border. Russia struck in three areas, in the northwest pushing toward Tabriz and Bandar Pahlavī (Anzalī), and in the northeast advancing towards Mashhad.² Rīzā Shāh knew that he could not rely on immediate German assistance, but he continued to believe in Germany's final victory. In an effort to maintain his political position for such an eventuality, he commanded the Iranian army to resist.³ But this action effectively sealed his own fate for the Iranian army quickly disintegrated and the Allies managed to occupy all the important centres in the south (British) and north (Russian) of the country. Churchill described this sudden invasion as "abrupt steps". At the time

1. London Times, 26th July, 1941.

2. Ibid.

3. Wanner, J., op. cit., p.137.

of the invasion 120,000 Iranian troops were included in the fighting.¹ On the same day ambassadors from Great Britain and Russia promised that they would leave when the danger from Germany was over, that they would not interfere with internal affairs, and that the invasion was purely anti-German. These promises were groundless - interference, as we have seen, was present, and withdrawal did not take immediately after the expulsion of the Germans from Iran - the British withdrew in March 1946 and the Russians in May, 1946. Although reprehensible at an international level, the Soviet/British invasion at least delivered Iran from the absolutism of Riżā Shāh. Russia, moreover, could legitimize herself on the grounds of Article 6 of the 1921 Treaty, which stated that "if a foreign power should threaten the frontiers of Federal Russia or those of its allies, Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior."² But Britain had no such means of justification. However the Prime Minister could not cope with these problems and on 28th August, ^cAlī Mansūr was replaced by the Foreign Minister Furūghī and a ceasefire was announced. The Shāh was still in control of the situation but found himself under the irreconcilable pressure of two antagonistic domestic forces. A radical group in the army insisted on continuing resistance by political means, whereas most civilian politicians, including Premier Furūghī, were ready to utilise the crisis to overthrow the Shāh.³ Riżā Shāh inclined to the first group. On the first of September he demanded that the Allies evacuate certain towns and that they pay war reparations; they replied with a demand for the internment of non-diplomatic persons in the German colony. Germany tried to prevent this by intervention and several top German agents managed to escape or to go underground.⁴ On

1. For general morale, etc., cf. Muḥammad Riżā Khalīlī, Vaqāyi^c-i Shahrīvar, Teheran (n.d.), vol.II.

2. Ramazani, R., The Foreign Policy of Iran 1500-1941: A Developing Nation in World Affairs, Charlottesville, Univ. Press of Virginia, 1964, pp.139-167, 186-192.

3. Wanner, J., op. cit., p.138.

4. Ramazani, R., The Foreign Policy of Iran, op. cit., p.290ff.

15th September the allied forces began their advance on Teheran.

On 16th September Riżā Shāh was forced to abdicate partly because of his own procrastination, partly due to allied pressure and partly on account of a lack of popular support. Bullard claims that it was the Russian advance to Teheran, not explicit allied pressure, which forced his abdication; Riżā Shāh's son suggests that his father could not, as a popular leader, rule an occupied country; Riżā Shāh himself claimed he was making way for a "younger force". He was deported to Mauritius, thence to Johannesburg where he died in 1944.

By the time of Riżā Shāh's abdication, all of the major landowners and initial leaders and those clergy and politicians who had been in opposition to him, and all the leaders of parties such as the Communist Party had been killed, imprisoned or expelled.¹

Neither at the time of the coup d'état in 1921 nor upon his becoming Shāh in 1925 did Riżā Khān possess any land or money, but by the time of his abdication he was one of the wealthiest Iranian landowners and one of the world's richest men. According to Ahmadī,² a deputy of the 13th Majlis at the time, Riżā Shāh had 46,000 title deeds to land, the annual value of which over the 17 years of his reign amounted to 30 million dollars (U.S.), and he possessed about 360 million dollars in foreign banks,³ including those of Britain, America and Switzerland. He amassed this by imprisoning or exiling other wealthy landowners and seizing their property for himself.⁴ He was a principal shareholder in the Anglo-Iranian

1. Ṭabari, op. cit., p.144. Also H. Katouzian, op. cit., p.123.

2. Iqdār no.18.

3. Āzhīr no.188.

4. Anon. Guzashta Chirāgh-i Rāh-i Āyanda Ast, Teheran (n.d.), pp.85-105.

Oil Company and received £12,000 per annum from Britain for shares in the company.¹ On his journey from Iran to Mauritius, Rīzā Shāh confided in Kerman to two friends that he had collected 1,000,000,000 dollars during his reign and was now leaving with nothing.²

One respected member of the British Parliament commented that Rīzā Shāh had purged Iran of all its thieves and bandits, leaving the country with only one supreme bandit ... Rīzā Shāh.³

Although Rīzā Shāh's reign which lasted from 1925-1941 brought stability to Iran yet the cost was a great deal of suffering for the people. His policies and the resulting increasing modernisation made Iran in fact more dependent⁴ upon Western consumer imports and laid a heavier burden upon the remaining peasants, as basic articles of food increased considerably in price.

Rīzā Shāh banned most political groups and his growing fear of Republicanism and any movement threatening his rule⁵ caused the eventual disbanding of all parties including the Īrān-i Naw party founded by Taymūr Tāsh⁶ which was a socialist and progressive party but was in fact neutral towards the Shāh.⁷ One exception to the ban was Rīzā Shāh's own creation, Sāzmān-i Parvarish-i Afkār,⁸ which was little more than Rīzā Shāh's propaganda machine. The lack of political

1. Fātiḥ, Mustafā, Panjāh Sāla-yi Naft-i-Īrān, Teheran 1335/1956-7.

2. Bīdārī-yi Kirmān, no.20.

3. Īrān-i Mā, no.567.

4. Ramazani, Foreign Policy of Iran 1941-73, op. cit., p.54.

5. Lenczowski, G., op. cit., p.105.

6. Khwājānūrī, A., Bāzīgārān-i 'Aṣr-i Jalālī, Teheran 1978, pp.29-71.

7. Miron Rezun, op. cit., p.111.

8. Rahbar, no.438, 20th Azar, 1323 (11th December, 1944).

communication meant that Iranian administration was prey to corruption and illegalities.¹

Throughout his reign, he controlled the Majlis personally² and elections to choose individuals from local nominations were predetermined and organised by the Shāh.

In conclusion, the judgement passed by the Persian Communist Party forms a brief resume of Rīzā Shāh's twenty-year reign, as quoted by Melikov: He was "the bitterest enemy of the political freedom of the workers and peasants". He was "the incarnation of the regime of feudal-clerical reaction, who is, and will be, the definitive champion of British Imperialism", and he was the "careerist-adventurer who has tied the State to the military interests of England".³

1. Rāzī, op. cit., p.71.

2. Mahjūrī, N., 'Zindagī-yi Yak Dīvānā', Mard-i Imrūz, 25.5.1323 (16th August, 1944). Binder, L., 'The Cabinet of Iran: A Case Study in Institutional Development', MEJ, vol.16, 1962, p.37.

3. Melikov, op. cit., p.405.

CHAPTER 2

THE IRANIAN POLITICAL CONTEXT

The period in which political activity in Iran flourished in comparatively free conditions and with considerable vigour was a remarkably brief one when viewed from the perspective of the long history that belongs to Iran. It spans the years 1905-47, with two marked phases. Most historians of Iran regard the emergence of the first political parties as coming with the Constitutional Revolution in 1905-11, and this preliminary stage of political activity lasted until 1921, in which year Riżā Shāh came to power. The second stage centred on the years 1941-7, in this case following the abdication of Riżā Shāh. It ended with the collapse of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt in Azerbaijan, which was suppressed by the central government along with all other movements opposed to its policy.

A number of small parties sprang up during the first phase of this political activity. Following after the events of 1908, the majority in the 14th Majlis was shared between the Revolutionary Party (Inqilābī) and the Moderate Party (I^ctidālī), although there existed also minor parties, such as the Unity and Progress Party (Ittihad va Taraqqī). During the 14th Majlis (1944-6), a socialist movement, organised on Communist lines, arose out of the members of the moderate and revolutionary parties (the latter were officially 'democrats').¹

A Communist Party appeared in Iran only after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and was responsible for organising two conferences, in 1920, at Anzālī, and in 1927 at Urūmiyya.

1. M. Bahār, Tārīkh-i Mukhtaṣar-i Ahzāb-i Siyāsī, Tehran 1945, vol.I, pp.2, 8-9.

During this initial period, from 1905-21, the percentage of the politically aware was low, barely reaching 3%.¹ Most of the so-called parties were mere outgrowths of traditional oligarchal patterns. They were slightly more structured, however, and possessed an explicit ideology that focussed broadly on nationalism and liberal democracy. As parties, despite being briefly in a position of power, these were more disruptive of the traditional political process than capable of presenting a substitute modern political system; in the years 1906-8, and again in 1919-21, they served as agents of rapid political change, yet could not produce any leader of political acumen acute and sharp enough to sustain a stable party (or governmental structure). When such a leader did appear, in Rīzā Shāh, he operated outside, and against, the party system.

The political vacuum which we have noted between the years 1921-1941 was due to the attitude and policies adopted by Rīzā Shāh, who saw in the party system as a whole, a democratic threat to his dictatorial rule, and as a consequence, suppressed all parties across the political board. This hiatus effectively prevented continuity between the two periods of political activity: those parties that arose in 1941 in response to Rīzā Shāh's abdication, a relaxation in censorship and increased freedom of the press, had in effect to begin from the beginning all over again, neglecting any experience that had already been gained.² Nevertheless, the proportion of those politically aware at this time was probably approaching 10%. This is reflected in the wide variety of parties that arose, ranging through right, moderate and left.

Many of these parties were transitory in the extreme. In general, the parties adopted patriotic and nationalist names; published their own newspapers - most with irregular issues

1. Cottam, "Political Party Development in Iran", *Iranian Studies*, vol.I, 3, 1968, p.83.

2. L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran 1941-8", *MEJ*, 3 Jan 1949, p. 46.

and limited circulation. These were often formed by prominent individuals, or small groups based on a **band** or **Dawra**;¹ seeking representation in the **Majlis** in the form of a deputyship or ministerial post. It was therefore inevitable that many such minor parties disappeared once the elections for the 14th **Majlis** were over. The existence of these groups was characterised by fierce in-fighting, carried on through the organs of each particular party. It is noteworthy that this situation reflects the common circumstance of bitter acrimony between rivals with similar programmes, all of which are competitors for the same audience. (The exception to the rule in this case, was the Tudeh Party). For all the actual differences between such parties, it would not have mattered if they were based upon Constitutional democracy, dictatorship, Islam, or implemented through Marxist, nationalist or religious principles.

Those fewer parties which did, on the other hand, have a more lasting effect upon the political system in terms both of ideology and political administration can be subdivided into three groups, according to political persuasion.²

On the left were **Hizb-i-Tūda** and the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān**. On the right, three types of party emerged. The first comprised Conservatives, and pro-British notables such as Sayyid **Ẓiyā**'s National Will Party; then there were the extreme nationalist parties, which included the **Pān Irān**, **Sūmkā**, **Āriyā**, and the National Salvation Group of the Revolutionary Nationalist Party; lastly, there were the religious groups such as **Fidā'iyān-i-Islām** and the **Mujāhidīn-i Islām**.

Between the right and the left were a number of other

1. E.g. **Ta'āvun**; some had as small a membership as 10!

2. G. Razi, "Genesis of Party in Iran: a case study of the interaction between the political system and political parties", Iranian Studies, vol.III, 2, 1970, pp.72, 74-6.

parties - Mīhan Parastān, Paykār, Mardān-i-Kār, Ittihad-i-Millī, Vahdat-i Irān, Irān-i-Mā, and the Socialist Party.

The most important parties were the Tudeh, the Social Democrat and the Jabha-yi Āzādī, each of which had the support of at least 500 people. The outstanding characteristic of the successful parties was their narrow ideological appeal, utilised to attract the support of the new intellectual element.¹

There are two major differences between the two phases of political development within Iran. Firstly, the changed social structure, caused by modernisation and industrialisation; and secondly, the spread of socialism, an ideology which attracted not only the modern working-class and segments of the new intelligentsia, but also the traditional elements within society (bāzārī).²

Different historians offer varying explanations for the rapid proliferation of political parties within Iran during the later years (1941-7). Analysis of the existing literature of the time, however, seems to indicate the following factors as significant in the formation of the parties.

Party political activity was encouraged by the occupying powers, it appears. This activity enabled the Powers to consolidate their position and maintain much-needed social stability in Iran. The parties formed, as is usually the case, a channel through which socio-economic discontent could be articulated; thus parties contributed to the stability of the status quo.

The growth of both a middle and an intellectual class during the years between 1921-41 also contributed to the

1. Cottam, op. cit., pp.93-4.

2. J. Bill, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics, 1905-53", Past and Present 41, Dec. 1968, pp. 201-2.

propagation of liberal ideas, and aided the development of political parties. Moreover, for the first time after the Constitutional Revolution, the Majlis was able to debate openly, and the deputies were thus enabled to express their views and form different groups. Often, these would expand into parties, based on a particular political ideal. This circumstance applied to various strata within Iranian society - landowners, workers, intellectuals, politicians, who seized the opportunity to make claims for their rights.

As a result of the occupation, it was feared by many parties that Iran's independence was threatened, and might not be regained after the war. Their only option, then, was to form their own parties to disseminate their ideas through society, informing the people of the danger of foreign occupation, and urging them to resist. The National Front party (*Hizb-i-Jabhay-i Milli*), for instance, led by Musaddiq, and supported by many patriots, sought to eliminate British influence over Iran's internal affairs.

Finally, the most significant factor in the formation of political parties lay in the dissatisfaction of the Iranian people with the existing situation in Iran. This feeling was heightened by the food shortages of 1944, which were mainly due to the large numbers of foreign troops in the country. Furthermore, in 1943, Iran was forced by foreign powers to increase the currency in circulation, a situation that resulted in high inflation. Concern for this circumstance led to the establishment of several parties, in the attempt to voice the dissatisfaction felt generally. As will be seen, most of the new parties emerged during the years 1943-4.

Numerous other parties were very short-lived. Some of the smaller groups proposed ambitious manifestos and were simply incapable of implementing them in practice, as the Democrat Party of Qavām, for example. Others, such as the National Will

party (*Irāda-yi Millī*) were created solely to deflect support from the influential Tudeh Party. These also lacked the support of the majority of the working-classes, but drew their members instead, from the educated middle and upper class sectors of Iranian society, a fatal flaw.

The limits of this study permit only one chapter to be devoted to the minor political parties. The Tudeh, and most importantly, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān*, however, will be considered in greater detail, as appropriate to their significance in Iranian political history. Here, we shall follow the lines of the political persuasion of the minor parties, classifying them loosely according to right, moderate and left, although it should be noted that such categorisation is more one of imposition for the purpose of easy classification than following a strict definition made from within each party itself.

Left-Wing Parties:

Thus, while we shall begin with those parties on the Left, only the Tudeh and the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān* and that of Kurdistan can be fully called left-wing parties. The others, such as *Hizb-i Irān*, *Hizb-i Jangal*, *Hizb-i Hamrāhān*, *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst*, all exhibit socialist views on a milder scale, although they can each be distinguished by certain individual characteristics. Certain features are basic to the make-up of all these parties: membership in all rested on conditions of age (over 18), a flawless past record, the swearing of an oath of allegiance to the party and its manifesto (which included forswearing of membership to any other party); and payment of fees.¹ The majority membership came from the new intellectual class in Iran, but their emphasis was placed primarily upon upholding the rights of the working

1. *Marām-nāma va Barnāma-yi, Ā'īn nāma-yi Hizb-i Hamrāhān*, Teheran, Oct. 1942, p.3; *Marām-nāma-yi Hizb-i Jangal*, Teheran 1946, p.1, part 2.

class.¹ A parallel stress was made by all of these parties upon the 'enlightenment' of the Iranian population concerning the dangers inherent in a pro-foreign-power government in Teheran - such a government, they felt had the interests of that foreign power at heart, at the expense of those of her own people.²

A basic 3-fold programme, with individual emphases, can be seen in all of these parties, centering around political, economic and social aspects. The political aim focussed externally upon the integrity and independence of Iran, and the removal of foreign influence within the central government; internally upon democratic government and parliamentary party vote. Economically, they demanded the establishment and growth of the Iranian economy, proper use of resource and land distribution, and the general improvement of Iranian economic well-being. In the social sphere, their aim was towards adequate health and welfare facilities provided by the government, free compulsory education, and reform throughout Iran.³

The **Hamrahān** party programme can be taken as representative of those parties under this category:⁴

It was concerned first and foremost to ensure democratic rule in Iran by securing freedom of speech and action for every citizen, except where harmful to public welfare, as part of the struggle against all forms of dictatorship or despotism; this also entailed the maintenance of the country's defence.

1. Cottam, op. cit., pp.88-9; Razi, "Genesis of Party in Iran", Iranian Studies III 2, 1970, pp.77-8.

2. Najāt-i Īrān, Jan 13, 1942.

3. Ibid.; Marām-nāma-yi Hizb-i Jangal, p.6; Razi, op. cit., p.77.

4. Machalski, Political Parties in Iran 1941-6, Krakow 1962, pp. 145-8; Marām-nāma-yi Barnāma-yi Ā'īn-nāma-yi Hizb-i Hamrahān, Teheran n.d., p.1.

Internally, democracy should be achieved through the upholding of justice and the fight against social corruption - either bribery, fraud, or the exploitation of labour. Thus there was also to be a fierce struggle against unemployment on one hand, and laziness on the other; and compulsory insurance against illness or accidents during work. Agricultural reform played a large role, the party demanding that a greater part of agrarian products be given to the peasants themselves, beyond mere subsistence level, while production was to be upped through new and advanced technological and scientific methods of agriculture, and the area of tillable land increased. In conjunction with this, compulsory but free education was to be provided throughout the country, to include technical teaching and supplementary education for workers. This would then form the basis for free elections to municipal councils, bodies that would administer the fiscal needs of the towns, regulate housing and water supplies, etc. the government would be responsible for maintaining communication systems, the natural resource industries in the country; balancing taxes with personal incomes, and thus securing a just distribution of wealth; the provision of free health and welfare services, as well as eradicating the problems of alcohol and opium smoking; and lastly, increasing the growth of the population through raising the standard of living, and through infant care.

Although the programmes for these left-wing parties have been seen to be very similar, nevertheless, in-fighting occurred between them as a result of their individual emphases. Therefore, the *Hizb-i Jangal* and *Hizb-i Īrān* fought mainly on nationalist and anti-foreign intervention platforms, whereas the *Hamrāhān* and *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst* were concerned with internal exploitation and social welfare: *Hizb-i Jangal* members asserted that while patriotic feeling had been suppressed in the past by tyrannical rule exercised through both internal and external influences, now, all Iranians were aware of the crisis that they faced, and should unite to change the government, and

denounce the instruments of imperialism.¹ This should be compared with the *Hamrahān* party's argument that successive Teheran governments had been oppressive to gain their own advantage. With the exception of a few exploiters who lived parasitically off the work of others, most Iranians worked in factories, offices, or farms, or as workers or engineers, and it was only by uniting their efforts and co-operating together that they could achieve their rights.²

By examining the individual life of these parties, we can see that their influence within Iran, both political and social, was indeed minor.

The *Hamrahān* Party was formed in October 1942, under the leadership of *Muṣṭafā Fātiḥ*, after the latter's break with the Anti-Fascist Society.³ It consisted chiefly of progressive intellectuals who had socialist sympathies.⁴ However, as a consequence of disagreement between its leaders among other things, the *Hamrahān* Party split in April 1944, and a new party emerged under the name of *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst*.⁵ The *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst* was a fully leftist, socialist party, and its new organ, *Imrūz va Fardā*, (put out instead of the former paper, *Shām*) claimed that the reason for the split lay in the apathetic opposition to Sayyid *Ẓiyā* and the "reactionary party" on the part of the *Hamrahān* deputy *Ḥasan Narāqī*, and in the lack of attention that the party's committee paid to the protests subsequently made over the issue.⁶ *Muṣṭafā Fātiḥ*, on the other hand, maintained that the *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst* broke away because they had only joined his party in order to find

1. *Najāṭ-i Īrān*, Jan. 13, 1942.

2. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

3. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran", *MEJ* 3, 1949, p. 49.

4. *Marām-nāma-yi Hizb-i Hamrahān*, Teheran, Oct. 1942, *passim*.

5. Machalski, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

6. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

jobs, and were therefore disappointed that he had not obtained any for them.

The Hamrāhān Party also suffered from the resignation of ^cAbd al-Qāsim Narāqī, deputy for Qazvīn. Shām expressed regret that he should have resigned after his explanation over his reticence concerning Sayyid Ziyā had been accepted by the Party Committee. Narāqī, however, announced that, having been unable to attend meetings out of ill-health and personal reasons, he felt that he should offer his resignation.²

The Hizb-i Sūsyālīst, led by Shahīdzāda and Banī Šadr, sympathised with the Peoples' Party of Iran, and also with the USSR;³ it was thus unfavourably disposed towards the West, in contrast to Hizb-i Paykār, which tended towards France, and against the Soviet Union.⁴ The Hizb-i Sūsyālīst also fiercely opposed Ṭabāṭabā'i's National Will Party (Irāda-yi Millī).⁵ Unlike the Hamrāhān party, the Hizb-i Sūsyālīst had fewer members in the capital, and more numerous branches in the provinces and towns, such as Shīrāz, Mashhad and Bābul. The programme of the Hizb-i Sūsyālīst, based very much on the socialist model of the USSR, incorporated most aspects of the ideology of the contemporary progressive parties, but was never given the opportunity to put its ideas into practice because it was blocked by reactionary elements in order that they might protect their own interests.⁶ Thus both the Hizb-i Hamrāhān and Hizb-i Sūsyālīst, as other parties, disappeared without any

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. Ibid.

3. Machalski, op. cit., pp.148-9.

4. "Twenty-eight Iranian Political Organisations 1941-53, Review of Iranian Political and Economic History, Spring 1979, vol.3, no.1, p.75-81.

5. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

6. Machalski, op. cit., p.148.

real achievement or influence, although their ideology was continued in a modified way through an informal amalgamation of its members with the Tudeh.¹

The **Hizb-i Jangal** formed a milder version of the previous revolutionary **Jangal** movement, now resurrected by Muhammad Tadayyun in January 1943.² The party had great hopes for success, believing that that would come as a result of their solid support from the whole of Gīlān.³ Their appeal was made therefore to all lovers of freedom and intellectuals, not simply for passive support but rather for action instead of mere political discussion. The **Hizb-i Jangal** believed that since the country was passing through a critical phase, even momentary apathy or indifference could have fatal consequences; sacrifice and heroism were thus necessary to eradicate all the problems and obstacles along the way, and to consolidate the first definite and ruthless steps the party had already taken.

The **Jangalī** programme remained essentially unchanged from that of the earlier movement, but adapted itself to contemporary circumstances. **Jangal** formed a coalition with the Tudeh and **Mīhan** and other socialist groups.⁴ Because of its strong standing among the working class, **Jangal** came under much pressure from the reactionary forces, including extreme censorship - just as had the earlier movement⁵ - and it was finally crushed in 1947.

The very circumscribed support, from among the bourgeois intelligentsia mainly in Teheran, was the chief reason for the

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. J. Kovac, Iran and the Beginning of the Cold War, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Utah, 1970, pp.34-5.

3. Ibid.

4. Elwell-Sutton, Political Parties, p.57.

5. See Ch.I, Gīlān Movement.

Hizb-i Īrān's lack of electoral success, compared with the provincial backing given to Jangal in Gīlān.¹ The Hizb-i Īrān was formed in May 1944 by Farīvar, originally a member of the Hamrahān committee;² the editor of its paper, Shafaq, was M. Rahmānī, who started publishing Shafaq by November 1944.³ Hizb-i Īrān fought on a nationalist, anti-imperialist base, yet it also exhibited religious tendencies, and had close ties with Hizb-i Mīhan, Vahdat-i Millī, and for a short time between 1945-6 also with the Hizb-i Mardum, and through it, Jabha-yi Millī.⁴

We should also discuss here the Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan, although it cannot be fitted into the typological scheme which we have outlined. Despite the fact that the Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan was definitely left-wing, it was more in the nature of a regional national liberation movement than a nationwide political party. Nor, however, can it be subsumed under the Azerbaijan democratic and nationalist movement, although both worked towards autonomy. The Kurdistan problem was compounded by its international character; Kurds inhabited not only the Iranian province of Kurdistan, but also parts of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, USSR and Afghanistan.⁵ Their demand for autonomy was an interim solution, pending the final aim of an independent, unified Kurdish state. As the Communist Party of Iraq declared at its second conference, July 1956, Iraqi Kurds are inseparable from all other Kurds in Kurdistan, a province which lay between Iraq, Iran and Turkey; autonomy for each Kurdish group is a preliminary solution before the final unification of Kurds in an independent Kurdish state.⁶

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. Elwell-Sutton, Political Parties, p.53.

3. Ibid.

4. Machalski, op. cit., p.160.

5. Naamani, I.T., "The Kurdish Drive for Self-Determination", MEJ, vol.20, Summer 1966, no.3.

6. A.R. Qasimlou, Kurdistan and the Kurds, ch.12, section 1.

This statement follows the general Communist support for the right of self-determination, which included, of course, an independent Kurdish state. Lenin stated:¹ "each national problem requires its own concrete solution", and thus the Communist Parties of Iran, Iraq and Turkey all individually supported the Kurdish movements in their own countries - the Tudeh in Iran, and the Iraqi and Turkish Communist parties.²

The West had a similar vested interest in the issue, which was diametrically opposed to Kurdish autonomy and independence, however.³ The danger inherent to such Western powers in the possibility of radical democratic change came with the Communist element. This posed a direct threat to Western interests in the Middle East: the oil monopoly (cf. Kirkuk), military bases and so forth. On the one hand, it was possible to support the Kurdish movement, but at the same time, this would incur the hostility of the national governments of Iran, Iraq and Turkey, which the West was unwilling to risk. These powers thus enforced their disapproval through the agency of local feudal lords, tribal chiefs, and religious leaders; the two former groups, indeed, were the most formidable obstacle in the way of Kurdish national liberation - see their roles for instance, in the autonomy movement of 1946 in Iran, which was crushed by the central government with the support of Britain and America.⁴

The Kurds for their part, recognised the necessity of struggle⁵ against external influences if they were to fulfil any

1. A.R. Qasimlou, Kurdistan and the Kurds, ch.12, section 1.

2. A.R. Qasimlou, People Without a Country, 1975, intro., p.8.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.; Kurdistan and Kurds, ch.12, section 2.

5. Feili, O.Y., and Fromchuck, A.R., "The Kurdish Struggle for Independence", The Middle East Review, vol.ix, no.1, 1976, pp.47-59.

claim for democracy or self-determination and gain their aims and rights. Nevertheless, they would have done better to have united with all the democratic movements in the Middle East in order to dissipate and eliminate imperialist influence in the economic field, military bases, the CENTO presence and influence and the oil monopoly, since it was this force that resisted the movement for national liberation most fiercely. How strong the Kurdish feeling ran can be seen from its re-emergence after the recent revolution of 1979¹ in Iran with similar claims, in spite of the apparent destruction of the movement in 1946. It thus appears that the only way in which to solve the Kurdish problem is through amelioration of conditions within Kurdistan, since that province is extremely disadvantaged in comparison with the rest of the country: apart from Kirmānshāh, there is no industry in Kurdistan, and capital income per annum among the peasants is only \$100. Radical land reform is thus required as are educational facilities to lower the high rate of illiteracy;² and the granting of basic cultural rights would help to improve the Kurdish situation.

The Kurdish people with a population of 13 million according to nationalists, but as few as 6 million according to William Eagleton,³ are spread out through Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and the Soviet Union. They inhabit mostly mountainous regions and support themselves through agriculture and pastoral farming. The majority are Sunni Moslems, and they speak an Indo-European language,⁴ and have their own cultural heritage: the first Kurdish literature dates from the seventh century, and a Kurdish press from 1898.⁵ In Iran, the Kurds

1. Kurdistan Report, No.2, March, 1981, London.

2. National Census of Population and Housing, Nov. 1966.

3. Eagleton, W., The Kurdish Republic of 1946, London 1963, p.38.

4. Limbert, J., "The Origins and Appearance of the Kurds in the Pre-Islamic Iran", Iranian Studies, vol.I, 1948, p.41.

5. Feili, op. cit., p.47; Naamani, op. cit., pp.280-81.

form 16% of the Iranian population,¹ living mainly in the Western plateau, covering an area of 125,000 square kilometres - a distinct ethnic minority.

The first organised movement of Kurds in Iran began in 1943 with the creation of the Kumala, the committee of Kurdish Youth, reflecting a tendency popular among Kurds in general at that time.² Internal support for the movement came mainly from progressive tribal leaders, landowners, merchants, and forward-looking clergymen and intelligentsia.³ External help was derived from the support given in the USSR in particular (among the socialist countries) - a Kurdistan-Soviet Cultural Relations Society was formed, on the basis of this co-operation. When the Kumala finally announced its existence in public in April 1945 it was to found the Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan, with the religious leader Ghāzī Muḥammad at its head. The new party was approved on September 12, 1945, at a meeting⁴ between Ghāzī and Makhirov, president of Azerbaijan SSR. The Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan in effect replaced the ineffective Tudeh Party in Kurdistan, and built upon the support that had been given to the Tudeh. The 100 founder members declared in the party's manifesto their advocacy of freedom from fascism, and the return to constitutional liberties, rights that they had enjoyed before the reign of Rīzā Shāh. The three papers, 'Kurdistan', 'Havar' and 'Hilat' started publication with the final dissolution of the Kumala.⁵

The programme of the Democrat Party of Kurdistan was based upon: freedom, self-government and autonomy for

1. National Census of Population and Housing, Nov. 1966.

2. A. Roosevelt, "Kurdish Republic of Mahabad", MEJ, July 1947, p.247.

3. Machalski, op. cit., p.166.

4. Farquhar to Bevin, April 18, 1946. (E 3499/3/34) PRO, p.10.

5. Roosevelt, op. cit., p.254.

6. Ibid., p.262.

Kurdistan; education in Kurdish, and local officials not 'imported' from the central government; law and security for all classes of society; co-operation and friendship with Azerbaijan; increased efficiency in the exploitation of natural resources, agriculture, education and health care; general welfare and prosperity in Kurdistan.¹

Ghāzī's position was consolidated with the acquisition of Mullā Mustafā Bārzānī's support from Iraq.² With his help, Kurdistan autonomy was announced on January 11, 1946, affecting Mahābād, Ushnū, Mīāndūāb, Sardasht, Saqqiz, and Mākū.³ This followed the declaration of a people's government on December 15, 1945; Ghāzī was elected as President of the Kurdish Republic, at a mass meeting of delegates from all over Kurdistan on January 24, 1946, while his cousin, Husayn Khān Ṣayf Ghāzī became Minister of War in the 13-strong cabinet.⁴ Kurdish thus became the official language, with local Kurds as administrative officials; the Iranian army and police appointed by the central government were disarmed and replaced with a Kurdish national army;⁵ partial land reform was effected, limited in its scope by the Kurds' willingness to redistribute only that land that had been abandoned by fleeing feudal lords or tribal chiefs, so that it was not so widespread or effective as in Azerbaijan; trade with the Soviet Union was also initiated, and helped improve Kurdistan's economic situation.⁶

Bārzānī played a major role in the talks between the Democratic parties of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, held in April

1. Ivanov, MS. "Kurds in Persia", Central Asian Review, 1959, p.192.

2. See Roosevelt, op. cit., p.257.

3. Ivanov, op. cit., p.192.

4. "The Kurds in Persia", Central Asian Review, vol.7, 1959, p.192.

5. Ibid.

6. Farquhar to Bevin, April 18, 1946, p.2. (E 3499/3/34) PRO.

1946 in Tabriz. These centred on the 7 Articles, with the conclusion of a treaty of mutual aid friendship.¹ These talks were important for both parties, and enabled them to present a united front against the oppressive central government; Teheran, indeed, received the 7 Articles very badly.² Suggestions concerning local autonomy and bureaucracy were submitted to Qavām, but while ostensibly accepted, were in the end dropped by Qavām.³ This resulted in more friction between the Kurds and the central government. In December 1946, Iranian troops were sent to supervise the elections to the 15th **Majlis** in Kurdistan.⁴ Bārzānī, at that time in Iran, conducted negotiations with Qavām to try to reach an agreement. The suppression of the Azerbaijan autonomy movement, however, caused Bārzānī's efforts to fail. The Iranian army moved into Kurdistan on February 22, 1947, the Kurds were disarmed and the movement crushed with the help of local feudal lords and tribal chiefs.⁵ The short-lived autonomy finally collapsed with the execution of its leaders: while Bārzānī returned to Iraq on April 13, Ghāzī, his brother Šadr Ghāzī, and cousin Sayf Ghāzī were arrested, brought before a military tribunal, and executed on March 30, 1947, along with many others.⁶ Bārzānī came back to Kurdistan, May 22, in an effort to continue the fight, but with an Iranian force of 10,000 facing them, the attempt was doomed to failure. Bārzānī then left for the USSR in June, 1947.⁷

1. A.R. Qassimlou in People Without a Country.

2. Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad", MEJ, vol. 1947, no.3, p.258.

3. Ibid., p.259.

4. Ramazani, R.K., "The Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic: Their Rise and Fall", Studies on the Soviet Union II (1971), p.471.

5. "The Kurds in Persia", Central Asian Review, vol.7, 1959, p.192.

6. Roosevelt, op. cit.

7. Qassimlou, People Without a Country, ch.2.

Five main reasons can be adduced for the collapse of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. The Kurds, while accepting help from the Soviets, also resisted Soviet disapproval of their own ideology. The peasants were suffering from a failed tobacco crop and consequent drop in trade with the rest of Iran. The party depended upon the import of food, a scarce or non-existent commodity partly due to the extra men to be fed. There were allegations of Soviet non-co-operation, and Kurdish tribesmen gave no support, the party relied heavily upon Bārzanī, while the rank and file in the army comprised a mere rabble, out only to gain its own material profit.¹

Much research needs to be done in this area, beyond this brief overview. Nevertheless, several comments can be added here.² Western writers are mistaken in assuming the Party to be a Soviet puppet;³ this is impossible in the face of the strong religious tendencies of the Kurds in general, and of Ghāzī himself. The true cause of the revolution was not Communist-inspired by the USSR, but due to the abject poverty within Kurdistan, a situation ignored by the central government. The movement sought to establish Kurdish as the official language in schools and local government, and was purely a nationalist movement, quite independent from the Soviet Union. The USSR became involved only through the Kurds' need for material support that was not forthcoming from the Iranian government.

1. Roosevelt, op. cit., p.260.

2. This section is included for the sake of completion of the thesis. Those interested should see:- Eagleton, W., The Kurdish Republic of 1946, London 1963; Adamson, The Kurdish War, N.Y. 1965; Safrastian, Kurds and Kurdistan, London 1948; Limbert, J., "The Origins and Appearance of the Kurds in Pre-Islamic Iran", Iranian Studies, vol.1, 1968; Kurdistan Report No.2, March 1981; Wenner, L.M., "Arab-Kurdish Relations in Iraq", MEJ, vol.17 1963; Feilli and Fromchuck, "Kurdish Struggle for Independence", Middle East Review, vol.12, no.1, 1976; Edmonds, C.J., "The Kurds and the Revolution", MEJ, vol.13, no.1, 1959; Naamani, I.T., "The Kurdish Drive for Self-Determination", MEJ, vol.20, 1966, no.3 Roosevelt, A., "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad", MEJ, vol.20, 1947, no.3; Ramazani, P.K., "The Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic: Their Rise and Fall", Studies on the Soviet Union, 1971; "The Kurds in Persia", Central Asian Review, vol.7, 1959.

3. Farquhar to Bevin, April 18, 1946, p.2. (E 3499/3/34) PRO.

Kurdish history, thus, is a catalogue of unsuccessful attempts to achieve autonomy from Persia, Turkey and Iraq. The 'bandit' image is a false and misleading one: their struggle was the safeguarding of a period of political freedom, gained after the Soviet occupation (1941-7). And just like the Kurds in Iraq, the struggle for democracy, and its attainment in Kurdistan, even if but briefly, was destined to change the political future of the area.¹

Moderate Parties:

In the period between 1941-7, a number of moderate parties - those between the extreme right and left - emerged. They were characterised by their adherence to an established pattern during this phase of political activity, one that demanded a narrow ideology and restricted popular appeal, mostly from the new intellectual class.² We shall discuss these parties according to their chronological development, starting with the *Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān* in 1942, and finishing with the *Hizb-i Ittihad-i Millī*. None of them were long-lasting, or had any major influence on the political scene. Nevertheless, they were important as models and examples of political organisations for later parties.

Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān:

the party was founded in September 1941, under the leadership of Amīr Ahmad Mahmūd.³ Membership was under the usual conditions;⁴ and its support was gathered particularly from among the *Majlis* deputies. Its official organ, *Daryā*, was used to publish and disseminate the party's programme. The major concerns of the manifesto centred on social, political and

1. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p.10.

2. Cottam, *op. cit.*, p.88.

3. Machalski, *op. cit.*, p.144.

4. See Left-Wing Parties, section of present Chapter, *supra*.

economic reform:¹ the complementary issues of national Iranian independence and integrity, and internal democracy, with a constitutional monarchy as in the best interests of Iranians, and comprehensive social policy covering welfare, land distribution and reform,² health care; tax reform; workers' aid; maintenance of security, army reform, national service in public benefit schemes, and establishment of good political, economic and cultural relations with Iran's neighbours.

The Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān had both legislative and executive authority. The hierarchy of the latter included the quarter committee, presided over by the foreman, the district committee, a parochial committee, and a central committee under the control of a chairman. It was organised on the basis of an anjuman in every bakhsh, consisting of 30 party members. These elected a representative to the council in every Shahristān then sent its representatives to the Assembly, at the centre of every Ustān, which in turn sent delegates to the annual Congress in Teheran.³

In 1945, the party leadership was transferred to Dr. Hasan Arsanjānī, and came to be regarded as distinctly pro-Western. It did not live much longer, however: it folded up in 1946 due to poor organisation and leadership, lack of support and pressure from the repressive measures of the central government. Its members gradually became part of the Tudeh, and the Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān disappeared altogether.⁴

Hizb-i Millī-yi Īrān:

The Hizb-i Millī-yi Īrān was founded in October 1941 by Muhammad Tadayyun, a former Minister of Education.⁵ Its main

1. Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān (Booklet), Teheran 1941, passim.

2. For more details see Manifesto, n.5 above.

3. Hizb-i Āzādī-yi Īrān.

4. Zafar 383, Ist Aban, 1325 (23 October, 1946).

5. Elwell-Sutton, Political Parties, p.50.

platform was the establishment of a National democratic government, and its supporters came chiefly from the educated classes. On top of the usual conditions of membership, members of the Hizb-i Millī were required to give obedience to the Central Committee and to the party regulations; to actively propagate the party programme; to give loyalty to both party and country; and to contribute monthly to party funds according to their wealth.¹

The Hizb-i Millī was the only party with fixed official headquarters. Its organisation created branches all over Iran, with a four-fold basic structure: a Central Committee; a Committee of Inspectors; regional committees; and lastly, a Council for overall control. The Council was elected from members of the regional committees; the method of election was decided initially by the Central Committee, and then by the Council itself. It was also the Council which defined the duties of the Central Committee - to legislate the electoral procedure to the Committee of Inspectors and regional committees, and to adjudicate the inter-relationships between the respective committees.

On a more local level, there existed branch offices and local committees, including committees of inspectors. These were supervised by the Central Committee's nationwide organisation, since they owed it complete obedience.

The Hizb-i Millī's programme focussed primarily upon the struggle for equality between all nations, and freedom from despotic tyranny. They thus recommended economic and political self-sufficiency to maintain Iran's international integrity seeking good relationships with neighbours such as Britain and

1. Marām-Nāma-yi Hizb-i Millī-yi Īrān, Teheran 1941, pp.5-7.

the USSR. The party's internal policy was directed towards secret, free, direct elections with a universal franchise. Law was to be regulated in accordance with the welfare of the state, not for the benefit of foreign enterprise, and justice should be a priority for all. Free trade was to be encouraged, and hoarding forbidden, the national economy should be improved through agriculture, cottage industry, and the exploitation of Iran's mineral wealth. A strong army would be established to defend the country from outside interference, and stabilise it from within, with the holding of political, social and economic conferences. As regards welfare, it was a progressive programme, demanding free compulsory education; the improvement of roads and other amenities; a comprehensive National Health Service, including water purification and hygiene; the opium trade was to be restricted through treatment rather than suppression; a progressive tax-system would ensure that the burden of the tax change fell squarely upon those elements of society that could best afford it.

The fortunes of the Hizb-i Millī depended heavily upon its leader, Tadayyun. On his fall from power, therefore, in 1942, their support dropped considerably. It took another year before the party reached a healthy state again, by August 1943.

Ittihad-i Millī:

Ittihad-i Millī was born after the Constitutional upheavals of 1942, when democracy replaced the rule of Rīzā Shāh Pahlāvi. A group of 22 Majlis deputies, including Hāshimī, Tūsī, Bayāt and Malikzāda, who had wide experience and knowledge of the struggle for civil freedom, joined together before the end of the 12th Majlis to form a group under the name Mīhan (Mother Country).¹ Most of their membership was drawn from government officials, while the conditions of acceptance were identical with the normal pattern. Party organisation was very restricted,

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

concentrated around Teheran and a few provinces. As membership changed, new members were chosen with great care: at the official launching of Ittihad-i Millī at a conference in 1942, Murtadā Qulī Bayāt was elected first President, a man who was then vice-president of the Majlis. Within six months, a 28 point party programme had been formulated. The press organ of the party was the newspaper which bore the same name as the party, edited by Muhammad Hāshimī, and first appearing on July 15, 1943. The first issue pointed out that political and economic power within Iran, as well as the international authority of the country was dependent upon the unification of all the elements in the nation. Consequently, the party's leader strove toward the principle of friendship between Iran and her neighbours, for patriotism, and for social justice. In addition to the manifesto put forward by the Hizb-i Millī in the economic sphere, the Ittihad-i Millī were concerned to strengthen the economy by attracting foreign investment, entering into international trade and popularising the taxation system. The party aimed to realise the social potential of the country by encouraging religious awareness and constitutional independence, linked to social and family strengths and to charitable assistance. Thus judicial reforms were planned in legislation, justice and court procedure.¹ Otherwise, the programme followed similar lines to that of the Hizb-i Millī.

After the first six months, the party's situation changed. A significant decline in support from within the Majlis showed itself, and the party's work was necessarily curtailed to extra-parliamentary activity, propaganda meetings and so forth. In 1944, the Ittihad-i Millī, which had been pro-British, amalgamated with the Hizb-i Millat, and together they formed a People's Party, Hizb-i Mardum.

1. Ittihad-i Millī, 14/7/43 yr.1, issue no.1.

Hizb-i Millat:

Hizb-i Millat was a reformist party, founded by Muḥammad Ṣādīq Ṭabāṭabā'i in January 1942. Ṭabāṭabā'i's invitation to all to join the party reflected his advocacy of social democratic nationalism. The party itself fought on the platform of political freedom through parliamentary government, equality of all individuals as laid down by Islam, unity of the nation, and progress that respected traditional customs. Party members were suspicious of external interference, since they felt that much of Iran's national integrity and greatness had been destroyed as a result of it. They were proud of the country's history, and thus resented the way in which other nations had brought trouble to Iran. Membership conditions and duties were similar to those of other parties, but **Millat** members were also required to call each other 'brother', in the Islamic tradition, to demonstrate their unity, and wore uniform to indicate that no social barriers existed within the party. Its influence was felt, indeed, throughout Iran, and it had branches in all of the major cities, towns, villages, and provinces.

The main unit of the party organisation was the **Jarga**. The **Jarga** comprised a group of people from all sectors of society, gathered to debate the major issues that faced the party. Each branch of the party had its own 'association', although when **Millat** diversified its organisation, it was more common for single social groups such as workers or teachers, to form their own **jarga**. The duties of this 'association' were to promote and organise party activities in accordance with **Millat**'s beliefs and aims; and to encourage and assist the establishment of the new **jargas**.

If a region contained more than three **jargas**, a union was normally formed between them. All of its members were drawn from the different **jargas** in the region, and each had a president and two deputies. The function of the union (**ittiḥādiyya**) was to supervise the activity of the **jarga**. A

similar procedure was employed in the event of the close existence of 3 unions, which then joined to form a council of unions. This council also had the task of dealing with the economic and social problems of the region.

The General Assembly was formed from individual representatives from all the unions in the country. It met annually for 15 days in May, and had four major functions: the presentation of annual reports from representatives on the previous year's activities; discussion and decision concerning the policy for the forthcoming year, including any constitutional changes that were deemed necessary; arrangement of the party's budget for the following year; and the holding of elections for the posts of Treasurer, Secretary, etc., and once every 3 years, for the position of party leader.

In exceptional circumstances requiring an immediate decision on some matter, other than a change in the constitution, another committee known as the Supreme Council was formed. This body could occasionally replace the General Assembly, particularly if its offices were required near the month of May.

The most important body of the party was the General Council, which had authority to make all decisions concerning the party's actions and policy. Its members formulated Millat's internal, external, political and economic policies, all of which were put forward for approval by the General Assembly in May. It also had the responsibility of creating all the party posts, and supervising all the elections for these positions.¹

In addition to these bodies, there existed within the party organisation a number of artistic societies that specialised in language and publication, whose aim was to

1. Ittibād-i Millī, 14/7/43, yr.1, issue no.1, pp.21-6.

propagate the party manifesto throughout Iran.

Although **Millat** was avowedly nationalist, it was also considered by its opponents to be pro-British. There seems to be little supporting evidence for this claim, however: rather, due to the party's influence and power, its opponents wished to discredit it, and therefore attributed to it pro-British sentiments at a time when foreign intervention was particularly suspected. In fact, the party's primary manifesto unequivocally condemned foreign intrigue in Iran, and both Britain and the Soviet Union came under this criticism.

Millat worked closely with other patriotic parties, and enjoyed especially good relations with the Unity of Iran Party (formerly the **Hizb-i Īrān**). **Millat**, together with **Ittihad-i Milli**, was eventually succeeded by the People's Party.

The aims of **Hizb-i Millat** were as follows:

To strengthen Iranian nationhood by unifying the various indigenous racial and linguistic groups into a union of ^c**Ajam**.

To regain Iranian rights from foreign control, and achieve a measure of autonomy in accordance with the international situation at the time, while at the same time relaying ties of friendship with other powers.

To support small businesses and enterprises but not on the level of national capitalism; to work for the workers and peasants to improve their situation.

To utilise national resources for modernising industry - particularly to develop agricultural methods and machinery at a time when all tilling and farming was done by hand.

To establish a national court in order to punish traitors

and those who worked against the good of the nation by hoarding food or engaging in other illicit activities.

To strengthen the Islamic faith by purifying it of the extraneous superstitions and fictions which had attached themselves to it.

To halt the cultivation, importation and selling of opium, a widespread practice, by making drug trading a capital offence.

To strengthen naval, land and air forces in order to protect the national security of Iran, and ensure that the servicemen were well provided for.

Education, health services and employment were to be available for all. Marriage was encouraged at a time when the population level was low, in order to build a strong and unified nation. Finally, **Millat** also promoted the idea of an information organisation, which was both to receive international news and to educate foreign power about Iranian policy.

The **Hizb-i Mardum**, the re-organised **Millat** party,¹ was formed in August 1944.² **Ṣādiq Ṭabāṭabā'i**, now president of the 14th **Majlis**³ took over leadership over again, as head of a group of ministers and deputies active in the struggle for Constitutional rule between 1905-11.⁴ These included three prominent ministers: **Amān Allāh Ardalān**, **Ibrāhīm Zand**, and **Murtaẓā Qulī Bayāt** (the former prime minister), and many

1. Kovac, op. cit., p.36.

2. "28 Iranian Political Organisations 1941-53", Review of Iranian Political and Economic History, pp.75-81, Spring 1979 vol.3, no.1, p.75.

3. Machalski, op. cit., p.162.

4. Ibid., p.162.

other deputies such as Nāṣir Qulī Ardalān, Dr. Āqāyān, Bihbahānī, Tihrānī, Dawlatābādī, Riżā Muayyad Sābit and Ṣadrī.

Many members of the National Union Group (Ittifāq-i Millī) in the Majlis joined the Hizb-i Mardum,¹ among them Amīr Ibrāhīmī, Sādiq Būshirī, ^cIzzat Allāh Bayāt, Sharī ^catzāda, Fūlādvand, Maḥdī Kāzimī, Muṣṭafā Kāzimī, Mir ^cāt Isfandiyārī, and Hāshimī. The Hizb-i Mardum also appeared to have the support of the Court, since it included Zand, who was the Shāh's nominee as Minister of War, Āqāyān, a well-known friend of the Court, and Fūlādvand, who helped the Shāh in his plan to prevent the opening of the 14th Majlis on February 1944. Moreover, Ṭabāṭabā'i himself was reported to be in favour with the court at that time.

The rest of the party membership was composed mostly of officials, engineers, a few doctors, merchants and landowners.

The official party organ of the Hizb-i Mardum was Mihr-i Īrān, and the aims and programme of the party were disseminated through its pages.² The party's manifesto declared Hizb-i Mardum's aim to be the achievement of unity for the nation, the preservation of Iran's freedom and independence, the restoration of the true principles of democratic government, and the observance of social principles which it labelled in brackets (Sūsyālīsm). Judging from the class membership of the party, however, it was unlikely that the establishment of Socialism could have really been one of the party's aims; indeed, it failed to be a progressive body at all.

The Hizb-i Mardum did, on the other hand, prove to be

1. According to Machalski, Hizb-i Mardum also enjoyed the support of the Ittiḥād-i Millī, which numbered about 30 deputies; op. cit., p.162.

2. Review of Iranian Political and Economic History, op. cit., p.75.

hostile to the Millspaugh Mission,¹ undertaken by an American financial adviser - Kāzimī delivered a violent attack on it in the Majlis; Bihbahānī had always been one of the Mission's staunchest opponents, and a number of other deputies - Dawlatābādī, Šadrī and Šādiq Būshīrī - stood for everything to which the Mission was opposed.

The Hizb-i Mardum continued to follow the ideals of the Ittihad-i Millī, then, a party which had arisen two years previously, but had at that time shown no conspicuous activity.²

Mīhan Parastān:

The Hizb-i Mīhan Parastān originated in October 1942, gathering in its ranks the radically nationalist elements.³ These came mainly from among the intellectuals and moderately progressive intellectual class in Teheran especially, and the bigger provincial towns; many prominent writers in Iran also belonged to Mīhan Parastān.⁴

Mīhan Parastān was similar in programme to the Hizb-i Hamrāhān, although more left-wing, and to Paykār:⁵ all these were in opposition to the Tudeh Party and Mīhan Parastān later amalgamated with Paykār. Its chief members were Muhandis Humāyūn, Khusraw Dībā, Karīm Isfahānī, Muhandis Ražavī, Pahlavān Pūr, Ālī Shāyghān and Aḥmad Ṭāhirī. Others, connected with the party organs, Mīhan Parastān and Shahbāz,

1. For more details of the Millspaugh Mission see: Millspaugh A.C., The Americans in Persia, Washington, 1946.

2. Most of the information used for this party was obtained from personal notes taken by Prof. Elwell-Sutton, who was an attache to the British Embassy in Iran during this period.

3. Machalski, op. cit. (1962), p.149.

4. For details concerning the organisation of Mīhan Parastān, see Sālnāma-yi Mīhan Parastan (1946) passim.

5. Ibid., p.9.

included Mahdī Malikī, editor of *Sitāra*, Munīrī, editor of *Ittifāqāt*, Qumī and Sayyid Sarābī.¹ Both Nāmvar, who produced *Shahbāz* and ^cAlī Jalālī, editor of *Mīhan Parastān*, belonged to the Executive Committee of the party.²

Mīhan Parastān's programme comprised elements common to most parties of this period with regard to both external and internal policies, although the party urged that Iran maintain political neutrality similar to Switzerland. By itself, the party was unable to make an impression on the privileged classes. It was therefore forced to amalgamate with *Paykār* and other progressive parties, on June 1945, to form the *Mīhan Party*.

Hizb-i Paykār:

Paykār was born in 1943 out of a group of youngish men united by dislike of the Tudeh, led by Jamāl Shādmān (Secretary), Khusraw Iqbāl, and Jahāngīr Tafaẓẓulī. The party's organ was initially the paper *Bahār*, which was subsequently succeeded by *Nabard*, and then also by *Īrān-i Mā*, an excellent paper sustained on a high ideological and literary level by Jahāngīr Tafaẓẓulī. *Īrān-i Mā* was one of the most regular national daily papers for several years, and had a strong voice in Iranian public opinion, giving a sense of democratisation and progress.

While membership conditions were more or less identical, *Paykār*'s membership itself was more intellectual than other similar parties. It numbered about 1000 members in Teheran, with branches in Arāk, Shāmī and Khurramābād; total membership by the summer of 1945 was 10,000. *Paykār* was organised through a number of bodies:

a General Assembly

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. *Mīhan Parastān* stopped publication under government censorship in June 1943.

the Head Central Committee
Head Revision Committee
Committees in various districts and provinces
administrative bodies for local associations
councils
local associations
groups

The latter two divisions were formed in towns and villages, and were the least tightly-knit of the party organisations.

Paykār stood in opposition to the Tudeh Party, which had Soviet ties, and also in opposition to the National Will Party of Sayyid Żiyā which favoured British interests. In contradistinction, **Paykār** looked towards France, a country which had little direct interest in Iran, thus conforming to the common belief that an internal party must necessarily maintain some foreign influence. Otherwise, its programme closely resembled that of the general pattern. Thus it was natural that it should dissolve and amalgamate with a number of similar parties: **Istiqlāl**, **Mīhan Parastān**, **Āzādīkhwāhān**, in June 1944, to form the **Mīhan** Party.

Mīhan:

The **Hizb-i Mīhan** was formed into June 1944 through the coalition of **Paykār**, **Istiqlāl**, **Āzādī-yi Irān**, and **Mīhan Parastān**. It represented a middle way between the Tudeh and the National Will parties, in order to give those who supported neither a political voice - one with a decidedly national and progressive emphasis. Conflicts within the **Mīhan** soon emerged, however: several former members of **Paykār** deserted along with **Tafazzulī**, and ʿAbd al-Qādir Āzād went to Šādiq Tabātabā'i's party, **Mardum**. In spite of developing an intensive propaganda, especially among the intelligent working class, **Mīhan** failed to gain representation in the **Majlis**, and it too

collapsed in 1947 when all the parties were forced underground and gradually disappeared.

Hizb-i I^ctidāl-i Īrān:

This party was a union of the **Hizb-i Najāt-i Millat** and the **Gurūh-i Bahman** - its organ was the paper **Bahman**.¹ The party platform was comprised of two closely related nationalist ideals: the resistance to foreign intervention in Iran which underestimated Iran's true strength, and opposition to Allied interference which impeded Iranian advancement, and caused financial and political hardship. On this basis, the party appealed to all Iranians to join in their struggle.

The main centre of the party's activity was in Teheran, although it had a few branches in the larger provinces, controlled by provincial and district committees. Membership was similar in structure to the other comparable parties, and most recruits were drawn from the educated and middle-class segments of society.

Hizb-i I^ctidāl-i Īrān's programme was also on a three-fold economic, social and political pattern, and included the usual respect for external independence and integrity and internal freedom of speech, movement and press in democratic rule; general welfare throughout the country, covering health care, education, working conditions, employment, agricultural improvement on a socialist basis, (with respect also, however, for traditional Islamic principles). The party did not, in fact, claim to be socialist, but it did exhibit socialist tendencies.

The **Hizb-i I^ctidāl** suffered under foreign pressure and governmental suppression that existed at the end of the War, when all political parties were weakened. The party's opposition to Muhammad Riżā Shāh led to its open suppression

1. Bahman, Sept. 1946 (Supplement).

by the central government, and as its political activity was curtailed, it was forced to go underground.

Right-Wing Parties:

All of the conservative parties had their base in response to the growth of the Tudeh Party.¹ This meant naturally, that their ideology was rooted in reaction to (rather than being a spontaneous and original outgrowth of) that of the Tudeh. This circumstance, when allied with the offensive against the Communist-linked Tudeh produced an extreme right-wing ideology that was shared by all the conservative parties. Several other factors served to increase this tendency: all these parties had close ties with the Court,² which was itself actively pro-British. The Tudeh were seen as Soviet-sponsored,³ and thus left-wing and right-wing clashed not only internally but also within the context of international politics. Cottam's party typology classifies the differences between right- and left-wing parties according to a number of criteria:⁴ the left were personality independent, the right personality dependent (cf. Qavām and Sayyid Ziyā); leadership recruited on the one side from the new intellectuals and on the other from the oligarchy; a situation paralleled fairly closely also among the rank and file membership (with a corresponding limited appeal to other sectors of society); the left was narrowly and rigidly ideological, and the right, while still narrow, yet had a broader ideological appeal when compared with the Tudeh; authoritarian and non-authoritarian.⁵ Within this general

1. Zabih, Communist Movement in Iran, Berkeley 1966, pp.111-2; Razi, G.H., "Genesis of Party in Iran: A Case Study of the Interaction between the Political System and Political Parties", Iranian Studies, vol.III, no.2, 1970.

2. Abrahāmian, "Social Basis of Iranian Politics: Tudeh Party 1041-53", Columbia 1969, p.16ff.

3. Cuyler Young, T., "The Social Support of Current Iranian Policy", MEJ, vol.6, Spring 1952, no.2, p.140.

4. Cottam, op. cit., pp.86-87.

5. This last opposition perhaps applies more to the theory than the practice, since right-wing regimes in Iran have in practice been notoriously authoritarian.

typology, we shall differentiate between the conservative and pro-British type, and that of extreme nationalist tendencies.¹

Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī:

The founder of the Irāda-yi Millī was Sayyid Żiyā al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'i. Sayyid Żiyā was associated with Rīzā Khān's coup d'état of 1921, and he subsequently became Prime Minister after only three months in office.² A conflict of interest, however, with Rīzā Khān, led to what became a 22 year exile, beginning in British mandated Palestine. During this time, Sayyid Żiyā was involved in various activities, also acting as Secretary of an Islamic congress held in 1931.³ He had been engaged in journalism since 1907, and had brought out the papers Sharq, Barq and Ra^cd in succession, the last reputedly the leading newspaper in Iran in 1921.

Sayyid Żiyā returned to Iran, and to political activity, in 1943. Reactions to his stand were mixed: Dr. Muṣaddiq had opposed Sayyid Żiyā for 23 years due to his former activities in Iran. Hizb-i Vatan, however, published a pamphlet asking Sayyid Żiyā to return to Iran and heal the ills of the country in this difficult period of Iranian history.⁴ Sayyid Żiyā's opponents claimed that his return had been arranged under British patronage in order to employ his agency to combat the Soviet challenge in the Tudeh Party. Indeed, this popular belief which associated him closely with the British was a hindrance in his career as a national political leader, although in 1943 he had the support of several leading political figures of whom ʿAbbās Maṣ^cūdī, the owner of the influential paper

1. Razi, op. cit., p.74, where he also distinguishes ideological parties of extreme religious orientation - these we shall deal with as they developed later on the political scene.

2. Elwell-Sutton, Political Parties, op. cit., pp.51-2; Lenczowski, op. cit., p.235.

3. Kovac, op. cit., p.42.

4. S.B.M. Hijāzi, Ḥaqāyiq-i Guftanī, Teheran, p.38.

Ittīlā'āt, was probably the most prominent.¹

In October 1943, Sayyid Ẓiyā began editing the paper Ra^cd-i Imrūz. At the same time, he announced his candidacy for the national elections then in progress. He was consequently elected as a representative for his home-town of Yazd.² Following this in December, he organised a number of independent papers, including Āzād, Nūr, Nidā-yi Āzādī, and Khurshīd-i Īrān into a national press association. This move, which was without precedent in the history of Iran, represented a commitment to the ideal of progress. In practice, however, it proved to be unco-ordinated and influenced by external sources; before long it broke up into small groups.³

Ra^cd-i Imrūz first attacked the Court and civil service, a criticism that could have opened the way to the undermining of the monarchy and stronger Communist influence. It therefore moved to the more radical action of vilifying the Tudeh Party: it was declared to be atheist, and its members traitors and anti-nationalists. Ra^cd-i Imrūz was subsequently replaced by Vazīfa.

Sayyid Ẓiyā's political activity began with the founding of the Hizb-i Vatan, which was re-organised into the Halqa party in mid-1944. The Halqa system formed the basis of Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī's organisation, which resembled in some ways a secret society: members of each of the ten ḥalqas were responsible only to their 'circle-leader', who in turn was one of a group of 9 responsible to a group leader. Each member was addressed only by his rank and number.⁴ This system developed into the Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī following the 1944 oil

1. Elwell-Sutton, op. cit., p.52.

2. Ibid., p.52. Machalski, op. cit., p.158.

3. Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī, 2nd edn. 1945, p.40.

4. Elwell-Sutton, op. cit., p.56; Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī Gurūh-i Hijdah, Teheran Sept. 1945, passim.

crisis.¹

Hizb-i Vatan and the succeeding **Irāda-yi Millī** were formed by nationalist conservative elements to counteract the activity and influence of the Tudeh and the **Hizb-i Mardum**. **Irāda-yi Millī**, supported by the British, parried the Tudeh's attacks on the West by criticising the Soviet Union, and accusing the Tudeh of being a tool of the Soviet government. The **Irāda-yi Millī** itself, however, was too closely associated with Britain and with the Court, too conservative in ideology, and too traditional in constitution to be sufficiently innovative or flexible in the circumstances. This difficulty could not be overcome even by the election of Sayyid **Ẓiyā** to the 14th **Majlis** from the British zone of occupation, together with the support of a number of **Majlis** deputies and members of the old oligarchy. With the co-operation of the police, members of the party organised assaults upon Tudeh clubs and upon trade unions, killing active left-wing agents, and at the same time disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda.²

The **Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī** was the largest and most active among the conservative parties. It had branches all over Iran, including the Northern provinces where **Vatan** had formerly had much influence. The President of its Central Committee was **Rizā Qulī Hidāyat**, Vice Presidents **ʿAlī Aṣghar Fīrūz**, **Ḥusayn Kāshif** and **Fīrūzān**. Sayyid **Ẓiyā** was a Secretary, along with **Ṣādiq Sarmadī**, editor of **Nidā-yi Īrān**, and **Pāsārgād**, editor of **Khurshīd-i Īrān**. In spite of its parallel position on the right to the left-wing Tudeh, and despite its strong support from the West, the Iranian Court, and its own organisation and propaganda, the **Irāda-yi Millī** lasted no longer than two years, and was dissolved by **Qavām** in 1945. Sayyid **Ẓiyā** was imprisoned, and although he was released after the 15th **Majlis**

1. Avery, *Modern Iran*, N.Y. Praeger 1965, p.362.

2. Machalski, *op. cit.*, p.157.

elections, he was unable to revive the party. A number of its members, however, adopted other labels, and continued their support of the Court. One of the major reasons for the party's dissolution came from Sayyid Żiyā's inability to establish himself as the champion of nationalism: he was regarded by many as an arch-traitor and an instrument of British imperialism. In 1920-1, as editor of *Ra'ḍ*, the British ambassador in Teheran described Sayyid Żiyā as a notorious anglophile.¹ Iranians also saw Sayyid Żiyā as instrumental in bringing Riżā Khān to power in the coup of 1921. On his return to Iran from Palestine, he was therefore immediately suspected of working again with his old ally, a suspicion that was in fact well-founded. The American ambassador reported to Washington that Sayyid Żiyā was encouraged by the British, who also persuaded the Shāh not to oppose him or his political activity.² Furthermore, Sayyid Żiyā failed to make of his party the sole defence against Communism, for he had rival parties - *Adālat*, Qavām's Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān, and the court, with its military supporters. Sayyid Żiyā also compromised the party to a certain extent by pledging different things to different classes, particularly over land distribution between landowners and peasants, promises which in the long term he was unable to fulfil. The right-wing policies of the party did not have wide appeal to the Iranian public as a whole, a public that had only recently been released from the oppression of Riżā Shāh's rule. Dr. Musaddiq pointed out on March 8, 1944, in the 14th Majlis: "The present regime in Iran is not really one of freedom for the simple reason that it takes a long time for a nation to recover morally from the effects of a prolonged period of dictatorship. It is for the deputies to help and lead the people. Sayyid Żiyā can only work when he can close the Majlis and silence the press."³

1. Letter from Norman and Curzon, Mar. 18, 1921, Documents of British Foreign Policy 1919-39, Oxford, OUP 1943, vol.13, p.745.

2. Foreign Relations, vol.IV, 1943, p.389.

3. Parliamentary Procedures Mar. 8, 1944.

Several points can be drawn from the limited success of the *Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī* in respect of its appeal and its structure. We have remarked that its strong pro-British leaning was, although clearly in counter-balance to the Soviet influence, a stumbling block to its wide acceptance. Cottam has observed that in fact, while the *Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī* and the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Irān* resembled each other closely in each of the criteria of typology, there was a substantial difference in degree of perceived attachment regarding their relations with the British among the Iranian public.¹ Thus Qavām was believed to be 'close' to the British as most aristocratic politicians were. Sayyid Żiyā, however, was believed to be at least as close to the British as the Soviets were the the Tudeh. Among the new intellectual class, which now formed the most politically aware group within the country, and were therefore a major source for appeal to recruitment, several different view-points existed regarding the best foreign policy for Iran. The *Irāda-yi Millī* inevitably limited its appeal to this group by adopting an extreme pro-British stance, for others felt that ties with the USSR could equally well be made, others again that Iran's dignity could only be restored through the restoration of lost territories; the majority of the new intellectuals rejected any close association with a foreign power, (although accepting Iran's boundaries as essentially unalterable).²

Secondly, it was becoming clear in this period (1941-6) that the earlier broad appeal was less effective in mobilising the politically aware than a narrow ideology. In this respect, the party can be compared with the European Fascist movement of the 1930s, for it combined a backward-looking ideology with a modern organisation, and at the same time was militantly anti-Communist, appealing to nationalist and socialist

1. Cottam, *op. cit.*, pp.86-7.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.87-8.

sympathies. It extolled traditional values, while still exploiting any form of discontent open to it, not hesitating to use violence against its chief opponents.¹ This resemblance to fascism was noted by the American technical advisor Millspaugh, who was indebted to Sayyid Żiyā for supporting him in the Majlis yet who nevertheless considered the Irāda-yi Millī as tending towards fascism.²

The Hizb-i Millī finally disintegrated under the dual factors of Sayyid Żiyā's personality and its general lack of ground support. It was not a party that was truly an outgrowth of public Iranian sentiment, but rather an artificial and imposed ideology, that, together with its violent measures, prevented its widespread and genuine acceptance within Iranian political life.

Programme of the Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī:

1. The defence of the political and economic independence of Iran and the Iranian constitution.
2. Freedom and equality for all citizens.
3. The raising of the living standard of all citizens, and combatting misery and poverty by founding houses and workshops for the destitute and impoverished.
4. Reform in instruction and education, religious tolerance, equal rights for women.
5. Support of family life by imposing, among other things, a tax on bachelors, and encouraging young couples to start families.
6. Reform of the law of inheritance.
7. Reform of the act on public functionaries, directed towards making the administrative apparatus more effective.

1. Abrahamian, op. cit., The Social Basis of Iranian Politics, p.131.

2. Millspaugh, op. cit., p.78.

8. Reform of the administration of justice by respecting the independence of the courts and their dependence upon Constitutional Law.
9. Agricultural reform through the distribution of public estates among the peasants; revision of the relations between landowners and tenants; supplying untilled land with water; founding a Bank of Agriculture.
10. Reform of public health care, with a prohibition on opium-smoking and cultivation of poppies; high tax on alcoholic beverages; support of sport; building of hospitals; advice on hygiene etc.
11. Educational reform: compulsory universal schooling; adult evening classes; freedom in education for ethnic minorities; the creation of an independent Advanced Board of Science.
- 12 & 13. Industrial activity, with research into new mineral riches; establishment of heavy industry and hydro-electric plants; support of private enterprise, with regard to worker-employer relations, based on generally accepted principles; compulsory insurance for factory workers; prohibition of child labour below the age of 12; creation of a Ministry of Labour.
14. The creation of a merchant navy; elimination of state monopoly; increase in exports.
15. Reform of taxes; tax relief for new factories and companies; revision of the public budget; cessation of the employment of foreigners in public offices without parliamentary approval.
16. Reform of police, army and gendarmerie through the amelioration of living conditions, the ending of conscription in national service; the creation of a voluntary army; separation of the army and gendarmerie.
17. Communications reform - building new roads and railway lines.
18. Constructing telegraph and telephone lines, provincial radio stations, and airways; abolition of postal

censorship, etc.

19. Defence of Iran's external independence; permanent neutrality; maintaining good relations with all states, in particular the USSR, US and Britain.
20. Opposition to dictatorship of any kind.
21. Additions to this programme were only to be considered by the party Congress or on a motion from at least one third of the party members.
22. Ways and means of adherence to these principles, and preparation of detailed programmes to achieve the aims set out in the above 20 sections were to be the task of the technical sections of the party in Teheran and the provinces. These should be presented to the **Majlis** by party representatives, and put into practice after their ratification.

Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān:

Dimūkrāt-i Īrān was a party created by Ahmad Qavām in 1946, when he was Prime Minister of Iran. It took form as a direct counter-balance to Tudeh influence within the **Majlis** itself, for Qavām felt his position threatened by the presence of seven Tudeh cabinet members, especially in view of approaching elections. Ideally, Qavām needed a strong opposition party in government,¹ something which the Iranian political system lacked, despite her Constitutional basis. Thus he announced over the state radio on June 29th the creation of the **Hizb-i Dimūkrāt** to contest the election in opposition to the Tudeh, hoping thereby to weaken it.² This step further accentuated the divisions existing between the Shāh and the left, as Qavām indicated to each his intention of bringing about the downfall of the other. Using ex-Tudeh agitators, such as 'Alī Umīd for example, to help organise the **Dimūkrāt-i**

1. Dimūkrāt-i Īrān, Jan. 3, 1947.

2. Ibid. Oct. 24, 1946, Supplm. ed. p.2.

Irān, Qavām established a strong coalition of landowners and higher officials who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and defined the feudal system. The party thus represented the old aristocracy who sought revenge against Riżā Shāh for ousting them from power, and the newer middle-class created by Riżā Shāh; both elements were present in the first Central Committee of July 10, 1946.

The limited range of classes within the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt accounts to some extent for the rather indeterminate programme of the party, divided into 11 articles:¹

- Art.1: The party was pledged to the independence, integrity and sovereignty of Iran.
- Art.2: Political and economic freedom according to democratic principles within Iran.
- Art.3: Agrarian reforms to help the country's economy, principally through improving the living standards of rural workers and farmers, and by improving relations between landowners and peasants.
- Art.4: Private property was to be distributed justly.
- Art.5: Revenue to be raised according to the workers' financial capabilities.
- Art.6: Exports to be increased following reforms in industry and agriculture.
- Art.7: The legal and administrative system was to be completely revised throughout the country.
- Art.8: The Health Service to encompass a universal system of health education and peripatetic clinics; education reforms were to follow a similar pattern.
- Art.9: Ministries of Reform, Work and Propaganda to be established.
- Art.10: Improvement of security through strengthening the army, police and gendarmerie, both for internal

1. Dimūkrāt-i Irān Oct. 24, 1946.

stability and to maintain Iran's territorial integrity.
Art.11: Reform of inland communication systems.

There was, however, one serious setback. The programme called for complete equality of franchise, but this was opposed by the popular Āyatullāh Kāshānī. The party tried in vain to find an equally impressive religious leader to advocate its own point of view,¹ but it lost considerable support over this issue.

Problematic, too, was the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt's support from the bazaar, exemplified by three figures - Abū al-Husayn Mīrzāda, a religious sayyid, Dr. Baqā'ī, a European-educated lawyer, and Husayn Makkī, the historian, all of whom were friendly with Kāshānī. The party's link with the bāzār was destroyed when the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt was 'secularised' following the expulsion of Hā'irizāda from the Central Committee.

The initial development of the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt, until its coalition with the Tudeh (together with the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāijān, Hizb-i Īrān, Īrān-i Mā, and Hizb-i Sūsyālīst) on August 1, 1946 (when it achieved true party status) followed one among several options. The party could have consolidated its position among the aristocracy, by adding the new aristocratic class to the old pre-Shāh upper classes. It could have made further inroads among the intellectual and middle-classes. Or it could have assumed the role which the Tudeh had fulfilled among the urban working class. In fact, the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt ventured into all three areas, as part of its ploy of setting different classes against one another.

The party appealed to the middle-classes in various ways: a great deal of work was done amongst youth groups, so that the party's constituency was to be found within the

1. Farhang, op. cit., Mar 28, 1948.

secondary schools; a women's organisation flourished, since many Iranian women were dissatisfied with their position. Support also came from the professional classes, with successes among the engineering, industrial management and technocratic classes, who, similar to the upper classes, were unhappy with the heavy pressure of the Tudeh.¹ The working class represented a very hazardous area of appeal. Since Qavām was trying to keep peace with the Tudeh in order to convince them of his support, he dared not encroach upon their main field of activity - the working classes. The solution to this dilemma was the coalition of the Dimūkrāt and the Tudeh and its controlling council of United Trades Unions. It was a very fragile alliance, for the hard-liners who opposed the Court clashed with those urging compromise with the Shāh, and there was a split between those who favoured supporting British interests and those, including Qavām himself, who favoured the US, within the Dimūkrāt.

The party was further weakened through the break up of the 'marriage of convenience' between basically incompatible factions: the intelligentsia opposed to the aristocracy, landowners set against salaried workers, conservatives clashing with radicals. One right-wing radical intellectual wrote that Qavām was a multi-millionaire in control of property the size of Belgium, who was merely trying to deceive the discontented by pledging his support to them against capital feudalists.²

Following the collapse of this cabinet coalition, labour policy changed dramatically. The previously inactive Minister of Labour and Information, Muzaffar Fīrūz, set up a workers' organisation for non-Communist wage earners, which stripped the Tudeh of its major asset - the working class.³ The Dimūkrāt-i Irān then

1. Anon., Khātirāt-i Qavām, Khwāndanīhā, Sept. 28, 1955.

2. F. ^cAlā Karīm Allāh, Shahr-i Dimūkrāt, Teheran 1946, p.7.

3. Khwāndanīhā, Apr. 24, 1948.

implemented Qavām's labour law of 1946, by negotiating higher wages from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and the Soviet-operated fisheries, and by creating a syndicate of Iranian workers, run by leading anti-Communists. After the collapse of the Azerbaijan national government, the Tudeh's only ally was the CCUTU, which managed to retain its power and remained a major political force, which Qavām was determined to break. Its General Secretary was thus arrested, its paper banned, its organisers detained, and the headquarters and party buildings occupied by the army. This represented the *Dimūkrāt*'s most important strategic success. Its determination to break the influence of the Tudeh was in the long run, however, its downfall, for its members gradually became disaffected with its operations against the Tudeh and, group by group, left, many in fact joining the Tudeh.¹ Qavām's concern for the security of the left also gave cause for concern to conservative Iranian pro-Western opinion, which believed that by controlling the 15th *Majlis*, he would sacrifice Iran's resources, beliefs that were, in fact, unfounded.

The failure of the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān* highlights its three major problems. The working masses were not universally aware politically, and it was therefore a very difficult and painstakingly slow task to mobilise them into action. Secondly, the only way to gain the support of the new intellectuals was to develop a very narrow ideology. Lastly, the brutality of the measures used against the Tudeh caused such demoralisation amongst the party's membership that it is clear that violent means were of very limited effectiveness.³

The *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt* was essentially an elitist party, not

1. *Zafar* 401, 28th Abān 1325 (19th Nov. 1946).

2. Assisted by Sayyid *Ẓiyā* and the gendarmerie, *Zafar* 385, 3rd Abān 1325, 25th Oct. 1946.

3. *Zafar* 401, 28th Abān 1325 (19th Nov. 1946).

rooted in the masses; its rapid rise to power was due to support from the army and police. Thus, with Qavām's resignation as Prime Minister, his party dissolved too. Its members, realising that the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt was similar in format and aim to Sayyid Żiyā's Irāda-yi Millī, defected to the Tudeh Party.

Hizb-i ^cAdālat:

The ^cAdālat traces its origins back as far as 1941, when the association of "patriots, honest, and unselfish people" first came into existence, and it became one of the largest and most popular parties in Iran. The party's constitution was formed on the disintegration of the Iran National Party: the new party order favoured an American alliance.

The leader of ^cAdālat was ^cAlī Dashtī. Dashtī appeared initially to support the reforming programme of Rīzā Shāh. This support gradually dissipated, however, and following Rīzā Shāh's abdication, Dashtī was in fact a bitter and vociferous critic of the monarchy over such issues as the crown lands, a court party or military control. It was also led at different times by Jamāl Imāmi, a French-educated civil servant, Siphīhrī, the director of Teheran radio, and various other deputies.

Hizb-i ^cAdālat found itself with a lack of credibility after its formation. Its liberal stance was ridiculed and a popular joke at the time made a play on Dashtī's name: his initials were ^cAyn Dāl, and the word ālat meant 'tool', and the pun suggested that Dashtī ruled the party personally. Nevertheless, the party had two strong allies. Factory managers in Teheran set up trade unions which supported Hizb-i ^cAdālat; and the party was reputedly linked to the secret paramilitary group, the National Movement, led by General Āryā. Although ^cAdālat was predominantly composed of senior civil service and older professional men, its programme was so

constructed as to appeal to a far wider audience. Its first aim was to oppose dictatorship, either individual or collective, and place control of public affairs purely in the hands of the trade unions. Its second intention was to promote personal freedom, freedom of the press, industry and commerce, and freedom before the law, so that all inequalities would be abolished. This entailed assigning all production to nationalised industry: the government would deal only with social policy, and political and administrative control. Agriculture was to be strengthened through setting up water installations, distributing seed-corn, and improving health facilities; education and administration were also to be reformed.¹

A clear demonstration of ^cAdālat's limited success in the 14th Majlis can be seen in the fact that despite the help of Prime Minister Suhaylī, and the Minister of the Interior, the party could only manage to win 11 seats. The impact of the party was in any case limited within the Majlis, which tended to be divided into frāksiyūns, rather than along party lines. Outside the Majlis, however, ^cAdālat thrived, and became financially independent. Thus its seats were linked to the structure of the parliamentary bureaucracy, its working support came from union members in the factories, and its white-collar elements were drawn from the ranks of senior civil servants.²

At the party's zenith, Imāmī and his brother were both directors of the Bank of Iran; Khwājanūrī worked in the Office of Propaganda. Many party workers wore the letter ^cAyn proudly on their clothing. This support, however, rapidly declined when ^cAdālat lost its grasp on important posts. It finally disintegrated completely with Qavām's creation of the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān. Its leaders disappeared in different directions: Dashtī to Europe, Imāmī to prison, Khwājanūrī

1. Cf. Marām-i Mā, in Bahrain, 22nd Aban, 1322 (14 Nov. 1943, no.10).

2. Abrahimian, op. cit., p.120.

defected to Qavām, while the unions were dissolved, and its provincial branches collapsed.¹

Hizb-i Umīdvar:

Umīdvar was formed in 1942 of a central nucleus of 11 men, all highly educated and many in influential positions. Its leader was ^cAlī Akbar Tabrīzī, a strongly pro-democratic and anti-dictatorship figure. In 1939, at the beginning of the War, Tabrīzī supported the Allied powers. When the Allied forces entered Iran, however, Tabrīzī became suspicious of the British. These fears later disappeared, and he again put forward to any who would listen, persuasive arguments in favour of the Allied cause. As with Sayyid Żiyā's pro-British policy, this attitude gained Umīdvar little support. Patriotic Iranians refused to join, although the party fought on a nationalist platform, as shown by its aims: These include the protection of Iranian interests and freedom by encouraging patriotic direction and the pursuit of justice, interpreted both morally and religiously. The party insisted on a forward-looking policy of struggle against foreign intervention, and misleading propaganda, treason, injustice and dishonest officialdom.²

The tactical programme included private and public meetings and the distribution of propaganda under what amounted to seige conditions. The party hoped for police recognition and planned what assistance and protection they would ultimately require,³ while planning the ultimate policy.

The history and development of the Hizb-i Umīdvar is hidden in mystery, since there is little extant material

1. Khawāndanīhā, July 6, 1946.

2. Memorandum by Kasmā'ī, Journale de Teheran, 3rd May, 1943.

3. Ibid.

available. From the scanty information, however, it certainly seems likely that the party was crushed by the hostility of an oppressive government, and reaction against its support of Britain.

There were also, apart from the above true parties, a number of what should properly be defined as fractions, or small discussion groups, although some called themselves parties. These were very short-lived and of minor influence, and we thus have little extant information about them. Most of them lasted only a few months before they dissolved and amalgamated with other relatively larger parties, and played a very insignificant role within the Iranian political system between 1941-7. They included parties covering the whole political spectrum, but since their programmes resemble those of the organised parties, we shall not find the need to repeat them here. Our main aim in this section is merely to include a brief outline of all parties and groups in order to present a total picture of the political activity in Iran during this period.

The *Hizb-i Istiqlāl* was one of the parties that put forward a more carefully planned programme.¹ As its name indicates, *Istiqlāl* sought to defend the sovereign independence of Iran. Its leader, ^ʿAbd al-Qādir Āzād, gave his name (which means 'free') to the party organ; he himself was forced to flee Teheran in the December Revolution of 1942. *Istiqlāl*'s main opponent was Sayyid Żiyā, with whom it clashed because of his dictatorial tendencies. Its membership numbered around 150.²

Hizb-i Dihqān was founded in May 1942. It had a firmly religious focus, although it concentrated its political attention

1. *Īlāmiyya-yi Hizb-i Istiqlāl*, 26th Mihr, 1325 (18th Oct., 1946).

2. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

upon the vital nature of Iran's agricultural potential.¹

Early in the same year, the Hizb-i Khalq was set up under Furūzish, who was in the Ministry of Justice and who edited Najāt-i Īrān. This was a left-wing party, but it had a very limited activity, and centred its policy on an independent and sovereign Iran, protecting the country against foreigners, and developing a welfare state for its citizens.²

A very similar party was the Hizb-i Najāt-i-Mīhan, led by Pāsārgād, who also edited its paper, Khurshīd-i Īrān. Najāt-i-Mīhan primarily arose as a consequence of left-wing parties with which Pāsārgād and his colleagues were disaffected.³

Other parties established in this year (1942) included the Kārgarān, the Mardān-i-Kār (led by Ibrāhīmī), and the Jabha-yi Āzādī, which amalgamated with the Tudeh.⁴

The Hizb-i Yārān was founded and led by ^{Khalili} ^cAbbās ~~Hulūfī~~ and ^cAlī Javāhir Kalām, who edited Iqdām. Iqdām was replaced in 1945 by the weekly paper "Hūr".⁵ The party's membership was drawn mainly from the bazaar. Its policy was vague, though it did look toward the unification of patriotic Iranians; its class policy was never fully worked through. Hizb-i Yārān failed to spread through the country, and played no really important part either in internal or foreign policy.⁶

Finally came the creation of the Hizb-i Kār in 1944, under the control of Nafīsī. The main article in the party's

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. Ibid.

3. Machalski, op. cit., p.161.

4. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

5. Machalski, op. cit., p.150.

6. Elwell-Sutton, op. cit.

programme stated that the primary duty of the party was to improve workers' conditions in order to create a unified front. Its weekly paper, *Pand*,¹ published the party's policies, but the *Hizb-i Kār* contributed little on the Iranian political scene.

The focus of all these minor parties was almost exclusively upon Teheran. Although a few branches were set up in other major cities, these were virtually ineffective. Furthermore, although their appeal should have been universal, they found their support mainly among the educated upper and middle classes. Thus they tended to turn rather into limited 'interest groups', with no attraction for the working class. The conditions of membership were unvarying and the same as all parties or groups: Iranian citizenship, over the age of 18, with no criminal record.

In addition to these minor political parties, small groups and associations mushroomed rapidly in this period. One of the more important of these was the *Kirmānshāhīyān* which was about 600 strong and possessed its own paper, the *Īrān-i Jawān*.³

The *Qumīhā* was popularly supposed to have been formed specifically for election purposes: it was certainly supported by Sayyid *Ẓiyā*.

The *Shimāl-i Gharb* had around 4000 members, the majority religious, who were notorious as trouble-makers. Another group set up for the election was *Janūb-i Gharbī*. Others were linked with particular regions: *Āzarbāyjān*, a 2000 strong union supported the interests of that province; *Sāva'ihā*,

1. *Pand* 1-5, 1944.

2. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

3. *Ibid.*

supported the Sāva district; the Qazvinīs; the Najāt-i Millī; the Gurūh-i Dihqān; the engineers', teachers' and trades' unions; the Āzar group of college graduates under Dr. Shafaq; the Landlords Society of the North; the Gurūh-i Shamshīr, whose paper was Ittilā^cāt-i Īrān; the Paymāniyān Party, which supported the religious beliefs of its leader, Sayyid Ahmad Kasravī, the Kumīta-yi Intikhābāt of 2000 members; the Kumīta-yi Intikhābi-yi Millī; the Ittihad; the Nahzat-i Millī; the Islam Society; and the Gulpāyigānīs from that city.

As with the larger parties, none of these small groups had the organisation or support to wield much influence, and they tended to dissolve into mere united-interest groups.

Conclusions:

Iranian society is politically speaking of a very delicate nature, consisting as it does of widely differing class interests: workers, intellectuals, capitalists all compete for power and influence. As the public grew in political awareness, so the party system and structure developed, and three stages can be discerned which correspond to the percentage of the politically aware.¹ The first limited the parties to mere outgrowths of traditional oligarchal patterns, slightly more structured, and with an explicit ideology focusing broadly on nationalism and liberal democracy. The second stage, following Rīzā Shāh's abdication saw the narrowing of ideological appeal in order to attract and mobilise the new intellectual element. The third stage, while out of our brief (1950-3) was one in which party activity was able to enlist the participation of virtually the entire politically aware population.²

1. Cottam, op. cit., p.93; and the article in general for much of this discussion.

2. Ibid., pp.93-4.

The main area of activity was always around Teheran, where the most powerful figures were to be found. The numbers of parties fluctuated quite considerably - it increased dramatically during the approach to elections - and there was a prevalent belief that all confusions would disappear when the class-struggle began in earnest.¹ The failure of most of the parties was due, however, to the irreconcilable differences between the party leaderships and the audience which they were attempting to reach. Many leaders were self-seeking careerists, striving to maintain the existing power-struggle and consolidate their individual positions within it. The radical public, on the other hand, wished to break that same system, and thus gave them little support. The general tendency was towards strong and charismatic leaders, like Qavām or Sayyid Żiyā, to rally the various elements of society in times of danger or threat from outside and inside Iran; but internal conflicts nearly always destroyed the parties and rendered them powerless.²

During the period 1941-7, the elements of the successful ideological appeal were becoming clear. An essential feature was an intense devotion to the goal of a truly independent Iran with a dignity consonant with Iran's great past. They included, also, an acceptance of modernisation and achievement of values which called for rapid social and economic change, meaning reforms within the administrative and judicial systems, agriculture, health care, education, working conditions and relations, and cultural liberalisation. Within these areas of general agreement, there was a wide range of viewpoints.³ We can thus distinguish three main types of political party.

The first⁴ consisted of those established by the ruling

1. Elwell-Sutton, private notes.

2. Ābrāhāmian, op. cit., p.123.

3. Cottam, op. cit., pp.87-8.

4. Sālnāma-yi Mīhanparastān, Teheran 1944, pp.25-6.

class, whose membership was drawn from merchants, landowners and government officials. They promoted the interests of the ruling class, by whom they were financed. Such parties exist world-wide, and when one is eclipsed, another soon re-appears to maintain class control. Sayyid Ziyā's *Irāda-yi Millī* provides a good Iranian example.

The second were nationalist parties, whose members were highly patriotic, educated and enthusiastic, and whose aim was to dismantle ruling class power and initiate internal reform in both the social and economic spheres. They believed deeply in welfare for all Iranians, and held national history and cultural achievements in high regard, working towards the establishment of democratic government within Iran.¹ *Hizb-i Millī* provides a good Iranian example.

The third were formed from those who supported a democratic national government, believing in welfare and equal opportunities for all citizens. Although this type of party tended to rely ultimately upon the Iranian people, yet they looked too towards external support of either a moral or material nature. They did not, by so doing, compromise their passionate patriotism and nationalist aims, but wished to learn from foreign ideological programmes, and to derive help from their parties in times of internal crisis.²

Among the parties of the extreme left, most advocated thorough-going socialist policies. These, such as the Tudeh and the *Hizb-i Hamrāhān*, supported the peasant, agricultural and industrial classes, promoting the cause of the class-struggle. It appears that only the Tudeh had any significant or long-lasting influence on Iranian politics or social life. Most, in contrast to the Tudeh, had a limited appeal within Teheran

1. *Sālnāma-yi Mīhanparastān*, *op. cit.*, p.26.

2. *Ibid.*, p.27.

itself. The small parties proposed attractive and impressive programmes, but their leaders (often simultaneously both focus and catalyst) lacked the necessary strength of character to procure parliamentary seats for their members. They also suffered from considerable financial corruption, which in turn resulted in grave inefficiency.

The party system was characterised rather by quarrels of a sporadic and spontaneous nature than protracted ideological struggles. This limitation of the party political life was matched by a corresponding lack of constitutional parliamentary life. The only serious attempt to alter this situation came during the 1906-11 Persian revolution, but this made no lasting impression, and its democratic rule was effectively stifled. After the fall of Rīzā Shāh's dictatorship in 1941, the political system fragmented completely, and the newly-found, and highly delicate tools of parliamentary politics failed to lead the Iranian people to a common goal as they ought to have done. Government attitude to the parties was at best indifferent, and most often hostile; collaborators of the reforming movements were frequently arrested at demonstrations, and the older, conservative elements within the government disrupted the progress of such parties with any means at their disposal.

A successful party required the support of both internal and external elements; the latter most often was found either in Britain or the Soviet Union. If internal support alone was achieved - such as with the Hizb-i Millat - a party could count only on a precarious future, for it risked foreign intervention if its policies were not in the interests of an outside power. If, on the other hand, a party received support solely from external sources, as with the Irāda-yi Millī, it too could count only on a limited future. The Tudeh remains the single highly-organised and partially influential party within Iran today because of its dual support. Yet it, too, could not

capture general support within the country and its hold is thus limited. This is due in some part also to the propaganda thrown against it from various sources, including, of course, Muḥammad Rīzā Shāh, who accused it of treason because of its Communist basis and link with the USSR. We shall examine the Tudeh Party in detail in the following chapter, but it is clear here, that despite receiving moral and ideological aid from the Soviet Union, the Tudeh was not an instrument of the Soviets, but a genuine and indigenous party within the Iranian party political system.

CHAPTER 3

THE TUDEH PARTY

(1) THE ORIGIN OF THE TUDEH PARTY

Within the Iranian political system during the period 1941-47 there existed a number of left-wing parties which exhibited a varied range of Socialist leanings. The Tudeh Party, as the largest, most influential and long-lived indeed of all the political parties, was the sole true and full-fledged Communist grouping. Its proclaimed ideology was Marxist-Leninist, not Socialist, and statements of this fact by the hostile central government were not refuted by the Tudeh Party.

This situation has led the majority of observers of this period of Iranian history, both ignorant and informed, to assume the total dependence of the Tudeh Party upon the Soviet Union. The organisation of the USSR on Marxist-Leninist lines and its proximity to, and interest in, Iran prompted the natural, but mistaken, idea that the Tudeh Party was nothing but a Soviet creation or a Soviet puppet.¹

This presupposition can clearly be refuted with the recognition that Communism was not simply an ideology wholly imported from the Soviet Union but had long-standing precedents in Iran going back as far as the political aspects of the teachings of Mani² from 242 onwards and the ideology of Mazdak³ a century later.

The history of Iran has been punctuated by egalitarian

1. Sayr-i Kumūnist Dar Īrān, Govt. Publication, 1959.

2. K. Kishāvarz, Tārīkh-i Īrān, 1975, p.85.

3. F.M. Javānshīr, Hamāsa-yi Dād, Teheran 1980, pp.191-215.

peasant uprisings, and while it would be difficult to show that the Tudeh Party was a natural outgrowth of such movements, it is clear that it would have made no progress in Iran if it had not found many who were predisposed to give a favourable reception to its ideas. Its beginnings can perhaps be traced back to 1880, when an article on scientific socialism reprinted from a Turkish paper was published in Iran,¹ together with an editorial comment, while a year later Farhang in Isfahan published a series of articles by the Iranian political philosopher, Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī (Afghānī), considered the pioneer in the spreading of reforming ideas in Iran.²

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, much socialist influence was being gained from the Russian based Social Democratic movement throughout Iranian socialist circles. The Tudeh was at its inception party to this reception, not as is commonly assumed as a dependent grouping, but rather as an independent localised Communist party within Iran. The more secure footing of the Social Democratic movement in Russia made it the natural mutual ally of the tentative Iranian parties. Thus we shall begin our discussion of the origin of the Tudeh Party with an analysis of its initial connection with the Social Democratic party, and follow it afterwards with that of the Hizb-i-^cAdālat and the Persian Communist Party (PCP).

Social Democratic Party (Ijtimā^cīyyūn-i ^cĀmmiyūn)

The most important character concerned with the SDP was Haydar Khān.³ He was born of a radical family and was influenced early on by Narimanov, founder of the Social Democrats in Baku. Haydar Khān was given the task of setting

1. *Īrān*, 202, 1259 (1880); *Hizb-i Kumūnist Dar Cha Sharāyit-i Tārīkhī Tashkīl Shud, Nāma-yi Mardum*, 265, 2nd Tīr, 1359, Teheran, p.3.

2. G.R. Sabri-Tabrizi, *Zindigānī va Afkār-i Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī (Afghānī)*, unpub. thesis, U. of Tabriz, 1958.

3. Sheikholeslami & Wilson: "Memoirs of Haydar Khan, Amu Ughlu", *Iranian Studies*, vol.VI, no.1, 1973, passim.

up an electrical plant in Mashhad. While in Mashhad, he was advised by Russian social democrats to establish a political grouping. However¹ he failed to achieve this because of the ignorance of socialist ideas amongst the population. As the factory venture proved unsuccessful he moved to Tehran, where his ideas did attract a certain following, even amongst the clergy.

At this time, the Social Democratic party in Baku² spread its influence throughout the Caucasus; after the Persian Revolution, it also seized the opportunity to spread into Iran - initially through the exchange of ideas with Persian revolutionaries. The ultimate transfer of the party into Iran was the task entrusted to Haydar Khān.

Advice was given by the Baku organisation to the Markaz-i Ghaybī (Secret Centre), a 12 man group of middle-class radicals in Tabriz, who knew the Caucasus, and assistance was also given to the Kumīta-yi Sitāra (Star Committee) of three Armenians, and four other constitutionalists in Rasht and to Bahār and his intellectual group in Mashhad. The leader of the Kumīta-yi Barq (Committee of Light) was Yefrem Khān, of the Armenian Dashnak party. By the end of the Constitutional revolution in 1909, out of the secular parties, the Social Democrats were second in strength only to the Constitutionalists. According to Tarbiyat "... during the first period of the Constitution, the only organised party was that of the Social Democrats".³

1. Muntakhabāt-i Khātīrāt-i Haydar Khān "Amm Ughlū", Yādīgār, vol.13, Dec. 3, 1946, pp.61-80.

2. Ettehadiéh, M., The Origin of Political Parties in Iran, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh, 1979. For more details of the Social Democratic party in Baku, see: Abrahamian, Social Basis of Iranian Political Parties: Tudeh Party 1941-53, Columbia University, 1969.

3. E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, C.U.P., 1914, p.26.

The Social Democratic Party had branches in the four Northern cities and several 'front' organisations, including the Anjuman-i-Āzarbāyjān, in Tehran; the Mujāhid (Fighter) in Tabriz, and the Mujāhidīn (Fighters) in Mashhad. With a strong party newspaper in Tabriz, the party gained a major success in persuading 300 Armenian, Georgian and Russian volunteers to guard Tabriz and collected a force of Caucasian revolutionaries. Yefrem Khān, with the combined force of social democrats and Dashnaks, liberated Rasht and with help from the Bakhtiyār tribes, captured Tehran. The membership, however was rather illusory since the party was small, weak and ignorant of socialism: it rather advocated, in fact, constitutionalism, secularism and parliamentary reform.¹ On the other hand, the programme of the Baku Social Democratic Party, which was translated into Persian by Tabrīzī radicals, was more socialist - calling for land-ownership by farm-workers and universal religious freedom.²

The Mujāhidīn merely stated that their programme was in accordance with the principles of Islam, and in 1907 the programme of the Mashhad group focused upon centralisation, rather like that of the Bolshevik Party in Russia.

The radical element sought not a Marxist ideology: instead they looked for Caucasian support for the constitution. Haydar Khān rescued the party, when its 'raison d'être' seemed lost with the defeat of the Royalists in 1909. He was supported by the radical Prince Iskandarī, an ex-constitutionalist, and Taqīzāda from Tabriz, both of whom were wary of the label 'socialist' because of popular misconceptions of the term.³

1. For details of the party programme see "Marām-nāma-yi Mujāhidīn-i Mashhad Sal-i 1907" Dunyā 2, Aut. 1962, pp.99-103.

2. Ābrahāmian, op. cit., p.184.

3. Dunyā 2 (an important document, concerning the Iranian Democratic Party), Summer 1966, pp.99-103.

Within parliament the party had 27 deputies.¹ Outside parliament, Haydar Khān was the organisation's leader. Haydar Khān probably avoided the Majlis because of his ignorance of Persian and therefore the non-parliamentary group was more daring in outlook.² They attracted the opposition of the ^cUlamā by their radical newspaper 'Īrān-i Naw' (New Iran) and by their violent tactics (for instance, the murder of Āyat Allāh Bihbahānī in 1910, which sparked off a spate of assassinations).

After the Anglo-Russian invasion of 1911 the party was weakened and its newspaper banned. Several socialists were executed and many more fled. The Iranian movement split into two streams following upon the Russian Revolution: Parliamentary Reform and International Radicalism. The Reformists were strongest in Parliament, the Radicals in the Caucasian oil-fields. Haydar Khān meanwhile, was killed in the struggle of the Gilan movement, which was partly communist. After the first Russian Revolution, Iranian radicals in Baku formed the separate ^cAdālat (Justice) Party, which ultimately became the Persian Communist Party.

Justice Party (Ḥizb-i-^cAdālat)

The origins of the early ^cAdālat Party³ are to be found in the social conditions obtaining in Iran in this period. The peasants of the countryside were oppressed by tyrannical landowners and lived in abject hunger and poverty. In reaction against the harsh measures employed by the landowners, together with the chance of employment, these

1. M. Malikzada, *Inqilāb-i Mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān*, Vol.5, 1954, p.133.

2. Ābrahāmian, *Social Basis of Iranian Politics: Tudeh Party 1941-53*, Columbia, 1962. For list of party deputies, see *Kāvah*, July 1st, 1918.

3. Not to be confused with the party of the same name of 1943, which had completely different aims and a programme organised along class struggle and anti-fascist lines. The later party was totally independent of this original group. Cf. *Āzhār* yr.1, 39, July 19, 1943.

peasants migrated across the near-by border into Russia, a large number being attracted to Baku where the oil refinery offered job opportunities. They were willing to stay, despite Iranian consular pressure and the cold reception they found, accepting low wages and poor conditions, because these were, however unsatisfactory, still more promising than the situation that faced them in Iran.¹

Several factors were responsible for the pull towards communism which attracted the Iranian workers in Baku. Their strong sense of exploitation by the local landowners contrasted sharply with the principle of equality operating within the socialist party. The socialist party in Baku exerted a large amount of influence itself - under the leadership of Narimanov and the sentiments expressed by the Russian Revolution, which favoured the workers' cause² also attracted them.

The Baku party encouraged such feelings, including the revolutionary flames aroused in the workers by the 1905 Constitutional Revolution in Iran. Such patriotic and revolutionary ideals compensated for the lack of education among the Iranian workers and thus inspired - as well as armed with weapons supplied in Russia - they returned to Iran to join the already existing anti-government constitutional groups. They were unable, however, to unite with the **Mujāhidīn** for the latter were supported by the landowners, a compromise which was unacceptable to the workers, fighting as they were, on class lines. As a result of this internal conflict, the zeal of the returning workers was dissipated: some were killed, others abandoned their revolutionary ideals. The later ^c**Adālat** party's membership formed around the dedicated core who retained their fervour and enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause. It should be noted that Iran was not ready at this

1. Āzhīr 40-45, July 20-25, 1943.

2. Ibid. 55, Aug. 19, 1943.

point to accept or adopt communist principles, and the party blossomed when this receptivity had increased and strengthened within Iranian society.¹

The first official meetings of the ^cAdālat Party were held in the Baku oil refinery following the collapse of the Tzarist regime. During these meetings, the president - A. Ghaffārzāda - was elected, and the constituent committees were formed. In this initial period, the Iranian workers were the most active members; they were anxious to prepare the ground for an industrially efficient Iran, with a strong worker element, but even more, were eager to grasp those principles of communism with which to return to Iran and create within the country a democratic form of government.² This movement was due to unfavourable social and political conditions within Iran.

The ^cAdālat was a true workers' party: its programme and manifesto were adopted from the Social Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, as were the methods employed by the latter party. A Council of Iranian workers was soon formed within the Social Democratic Party, its members numbering 50,000 by 1917.³ It established contacts with sympathetic groups within Iran itself, spreading propaganda throughout the country, so that within a short period secret branches of the party had sprung up, extending the party's influence from the Soviet Union, over Iran, and linking up with groups such as the Social Democratic party. Union between these two parties, however, was not achieved, due to the divergent aims and ideas of both groups: ^cAdālat accused the Social Democrats of furthering the interests of the bourgeoisie to which many of them belonged,

1. Āzhīr 46-50, July 26-30, 1943.

2. Ibid. 72, Oct. 21, 1943.

3. Ibid. 56, Aug. 22, 1943.

and the Social Democrats responded by charging the workers with interfering in the internal affairs of Russia in supporting the Bolshevik Revolution.¹

The leading figure and most prominent member of ^cAdālat was Ghaffārzāda, elected as president. Ghaffārzāda was asked in 1920 by the Soviet authorities ² to return to Iran to coordinate the work of the Gīlān movement. His death at the hands of opponents of the ^cAdālat Party, before he was able to begin his activity, had a dramatic effect on both the Gīlān movement and the ^cAdālat Party itself. It was responsible, together with the formation of the Musāvāt Party in Baku, under the leadership of Rasūlzāda, for the weakening of the ^cAdālat party; Ghaffārzāda was replaced by Pīshavarī.

The establishment of the ^cAdālat Party in Gīlān, which was supported by the Communist movement, was part of the way communism was introduced into Iran. Its presence exhibited, however, both positive and negative features. Although it emphasised class equality and land redistribution, its actual grasp of communist ideology was weak, it opposed other ideologies,³ and the party was fragmented into communist and non-communist elements, who quarrelled between themselves.⁴ During this period, the party changed its name to the Persian Communist Party (PCP) and pledged support to the Soviet Union.⁵

After the collapse of the uneasy alliance between

1. Āzhīr 58, Aug. 26, 1943.

2. Ibid. 78, Nov. 7, 1943.

3. There was an alliance in the movement between religious and communist elements.

4. Āzhīr 117, Feb. 13, Zabih, op. cit., p.22.

5. The First Congress was held in Anzālī, June 1920. Zabih, op. cit.

communists and non-communists in the Gīlān movement in July 1920, a National Committee for the liberation of Persia was set up, but its policies were deemed too radical for the present state of the Iranian peasantry, and it was also seen at the 1920 Congress in Baku, organised by the Comintern, that the Iranian delegates were primarily anti-British nationalists, rather than committed communists. This led to a new thesis in October 1920, at the election of a new Central Committee (of the PCP), modifying the earlier anti-religious stance and the call for action for immediate land confiscation. However, a united front against Britain and the Central Government was effected by May 1921 and a first attempt was made to extend the party's influence beyond Gīlān. On August 4, 1921, Gīlān was once again proclaimed a Soviet Republic, but the unity was fragile and the entire movement soon collapsed.

The methods of the PCP now shifted towards the creation of trade unions and peasant organisations and gradual infiltration through education and propaganda. The most fertile groups for the latter activity was found to be among Iranian upper and middle class students studying in Germany, who were exposed to European democracy. These students became the core of anti Riżā Shāh sentiments and formed the backbone of the communist opposition.² Germany became the centre of these activities, since the PCP's movements were restricted in Iran by the policies and legislation of Riżā Shāh's government. In early 1929, the students started publication of their monthly journal *Sitāra-yi Surkh* (Red Star).³ Later in 1931 another newspaper, *Paykār* (Battle)⁴ was issued fortnightly, edited by

2. The Soviet Union and Iran; Soviet policy from the beginnings of the Pahlavi dynasty until the Soviet invasion in 1941, Miron Rezun, Geneva, 1981, p.288.

3. M. Rezun, *op. cit.*, p.288.

4. *Ibid.*, p.289.

M. ^cAlavī. The Iranian students, with the support of the local German Communist Party, spread these publications throughout Europe, even managing to smuggle copies into Iran.¹ This fast growing student movement was felt as a dangerous threat by Rīzā Shāh. He therefore requested the German government to ban all such publications and prohibit further propaganda. At the same time, he introduced a law forbidding similar propagandising activity within Iran. The Germans acquiesced to this somewhat reluctantly, wanting to maintain their economic ties and good relations with Iran. Paykār was banned, and its editor, ^cAlavī, expelled. Despite this, a new publication was started, under the name Nahzat (Movement), which shared the same fate as Paykār.² In 1931, these students having attracted mass support among fellow Iranians studying in Germany, decided upon return to Iran encouraged and led by Arānī.³ There, as a consequence, the propaganda law was passed by the Majlis in the same year and they were forced to work underground. Secret discussion groups organised by Arānī were formed from lower middle class elements, such as students, teachers, lawyers, judges and trade union leaders attracted through the communist publication Dunyā, which was strongly anti-fascist,⁴ and sports and cultural clubs were used as covers for these meetings. They were uncovered, however, in 1937, apparently through widespread infiltration by the Iranian secret police and 53 of the most prominent members were arrested under the 1931 law. Put on trial in 1938, all denied being communists, but 45 were convicted and given prison sentences. Arānī received 10 years, but in his defence, he vigorously upheld his dialectical materialism and attacked the

1. M. Rezān, op. cit., p.291.

2. Ibid., pp. 292, 94, 95.

3. Arānī was born in Azerbaijan and educated in Tehran. He then studied in Berlin, where he adopted the marxist ideology with which he returned to Iran in 1930, dedicated to popularising it there.

4. Dunyā 3, 1936, p.29, 5 (1947), pp.15-62.

1931 law as unconstitutional and a violation of justice. He also claimed that both socialism and communism, as intrinsic elements of western civilisation, could not be barred by Iran, which was attempting to westernize itself.¹

Arānī died in prison 16 months later. His colleagues claimed that he had deliberately been refused medical treatment, while the authorities insisted that he had died from incurable typhus. However, in 1943 Azhīr stated that, although Arānī had died from typhus, the authorities had purposely placed him in the cell of a former typhoid prisoner. The other 53 members convicted made contacts among other political prisoners within the prison, and were definitely hardened by their prison experience. Upon their release in 1941, they then formed the nucleus of the new Tudeh (Masses) Party, whose leaders were Arānī's colleagues from Europe.

(2) THE TUDEH PARTY (HIZB-I-TŪDA)

The release of the communists was part of the general amnesty brought about by the invasion of Iran by the Allied powers in 1941, when Rīzā Shāh also abdicated. At this time all political restrictions were lifted and publications were allowed to circulate. There was a general upsurge of interest and participation in political affairs amongst the population, with a predominant desire to avert the possibility of another dictatorial role similar to Rīzā Shāh's, although there was no strong central authority to replace his former government. This might have presented the Tudeh party with the opportunity to establish itself in power, but several factors in fact prevented this from happening. Despite its organised structure, it was still a young party and lacked the experienced leaders needed for the co-ordination of such a programme. On top of this, Iranian society was not really ready for a proletarian role,

1. Arānī, I., Difa'iyyāt-i Duktūr Arānī.

which would have required a much greater political awareness than existed amongst Iranians at the time, and its leftist policies constituted a considerable threat both to the Iranian conservative elite, i.e. landowners and capitalists, and to the Western powers.¹ The party organisation closely resembled that of Western political parties and therefore created a left-wing challenge² to Iranian ruling class interests, which were right-wing, and to its foreign policy. The ruling class had traditionally supported imperialist countries such as Britain. If the Tudeh came to power it was likely that a shift towards Communist governments would take place, with the Soviet Union playing a major role. International and national pressure thus weighed heavily against its taking power although it was supported morally and ideologically by the USSR.

The Tudeh were, however, the only progressive party within Iran, and they defended the 1905 Constitutional law, together with the ideals of democracy. Although basing their principles on Marxism-Leninism, they were wise enough to endeavour to adapt communist goals to the particular conditions and format of Iranian society.³ This accounts in part for their strong constitutional and nationalist emphases, as well as for their argument in favour of the restoration to all those living in Iran of the rights promised them by the Constitutional Law. Such ideas and policies were revolutionary in Iran, in that they were extremely progressive and quite unknown in Iranian history, but the Tudeh cannot be said to be revolutionaries in a military sense, for they did not call for force and violence in order to obtain power, but advocated the parliamentary electoral system as the best way instead. This in fact seems

1. Lenczowski, G., "Communist Movement in Iran", MEJ, vol.I, 1947.

2. Zabih, S., Communist Movement in Iran, University of California, 1966.

4. Barnāma-yi Hizb-i Tūda-yi Īrān, n.d., Tehran.

one of their weaknesses, since they had no alternative options in the face of electoral fraud, which would leave dictatorship still in control. However they recognised that military methods would be unsuitable in the present climate and the likely reaction of the Allies to any threat to the **status quo** in Iran, given the threat that fascism was posing internationally and the lack of mass organisations to influence and use within Iran itself.

Due to its belief that social conditions in Iran were not right for communism, the Tudeh modified its approach by seeking to support the constitution. However, certain Tudeh enemies, such as Sayyid Żiyā, attempted to frighten traders and capitalists in Iran with the name of communism.¹ Their policy was also influenced by the religious character of Iranian society. The vast majority of Iranians were devout Muslims - as indeed were many of the members of the Tudeh - and the party was anxious not to lay itself open to attack on the charge of being communists, which they feared the ^cUlamā (religious leaders) might bring against them. As a visible sign of respect, they thus held a religious ceremony in commemoration of the death of Arānī and also that of Mudarris, who had been the leading religious opponent of Riżā Shāh.² The desire to avoid creating tension with the ^cUlamā, by adopting a broad programme, was one of the immediate aims which the party established for itself. The others included the release of the remaining '53' still imprisoned, recognition of the Tudeh as a legitimate organisation, and the printing of their own newspaper, to come out daily. These were mostly achieved quite early on, and by 1941, the party was declaring 'democratic centralisation' to be its objective. The leadership had grown strong enough to impose its decisions on the organisation, and as a result, it divided into sub-committees around the cell structure; the rural leaders were unaware of

1. See Abrahimian, Iran Between Two Revolutions, PUP, Princeton, 1982, p.285, 5. See also Rahbar, 17 May, 1944.

2. Abrahimian, op. cit., p.282.

all the gains they might have reaped if they had emphasised the differences between the provinces and Tehran.¹

At the conference which was held in June 1942, the 120 delegates from all the Tudeh's sources of support who attended - and whom the Party hoped would create a nationwide basis - made a number of demands: they requested from the government allowance for greater class representation in politics, the safeguarding of human rights - under which repeal of the 1931 propaganda law² (which had outlawed communism) was included. They called also for land distribution, improved conditions for the peasant class and for legalised trade union activities, particularly free collective bargaining, and lastly they wanted to spread communist education throughout the country.

The party had reached a national scale by the time of the Majlis elections in 1943-44. Its leaders came primarily from the professions - intellectuals, lawyers, etc., and the ranks were filled with various labour groupings. The party also organised a freedom front, which ran 30 different newspapers.³

In the elections eight of the Tudeh's 15 candidates were returned from the Northern industrial areas of Isfahan, despite strong opposition from the British as well as from the Conservative elements within Iran.⁴ This meant that the Party now gained influence in Parliament, and by having members elected, it thus legitimated its appeal, although it chose to emphasise not its communist nature, but rather individual rights and general reform. Part of its strength also derived from the fact that the Tudeh deputies voted within the Majlis

1. Rouhallah Ramazan. The Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, p.411.

2. Zabih, op. cit., p.75.

3. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran 1941-8", MEJ, 3rd Jan. 1949.

4. Zabih, op. cit., pp.79-80.

as a party unit.¹

Sayyid Żiyā Tabātabā'ī attempted to counter this widespread influence and support of the Tudeh by creating the rival National Will Party,² which according to Binder was backed by the British³ and closely connected to the Court.⁴

As a result of the effort to tar the Tudeh's image by accusing it of being an instrument of the Soviet Union, Sayyid Żiyā himself came under suspicion from the Party, as well as from other progressive parties, and the people themselves, who feared a dictatorship similar to that which they had experienced in 1921⁵ which led to Riżā Shāh's dictatorship. *Pravda's* claim⁶ that Sayyid Żiyā was recruited by the British to destroy the Tudeh and other democratic parties was indeed given credibility by his subsequent actions.

The Party also faced opposition from reactionary Muslim tribal chiefs in the South. Qashqā'ī and Bakhtiyārī leaders were ready by 1945 to help Americans in Iran fight the communist infiltration which threatened their property.⁷

The Tudeh published its programme (a remarkable act in itself) at the Congress held in early August 1944,⁸ to which 168 delegates came. The points which were adopted covered a

1. Marlowe, Iran, London 1963.

2. For more details concerning the NWP, see below.

3. Binder, Iran: Political Development in a Changing Society, California, 1964.

4. Ibid., p.206.

5. Rahbar, No.621-622, 11th-12th Murdād, 1324 (2nd-3rd August, 1945); and no.631-632, 24th-25th Murdād, 1324 (15th-16th August, 1945).

6. Rahbar, No.646-647, 13th-14th Āzar, 1324 (4th-5th December, 1945).

7. Leland Morris, US Ambassador to Tehran to Sec. of State Stettinius, Feb. 28, 1945, 891 00/2-2845.

8. See section on Tudeh Party platform.

wide range and drew much support for the party. They included a strong nationalist emphasis; firm opposition to foreign intervention, especially British;¹ and affirmation of Iranian national independence - which to some extent rivalled the Nationalist movement, as well as a call for world peace. Internally, the Congress pledged support for the oppressed, and stressed the need for equality, constitutional rights and liberties, such as freedom of religion, ideas and a modernized, centralized economic order.

The Communist nature of the Tudeh was purposely played down by the Party in comparison with its nationalist and patriotic character.² The Tudeh believed that Iranian society was not ready to accept Communism. If it was offered to the people they would resist it forcefully simply because it came too early and was not understood by them.³ This was a fact also recognised by the reactionary elements within the central government, who realised its propaganda potential. They encouraged the populace to distrust Communists as tools of the Soviet Union: when the Soviet Union in 1944 asked for an oil concession in the North, the Tudeh was associated with this Communist regime whose aim was the infiltration of Iran.⁴ The Party did indeed support the request, but the background to the oil concession issue shows how its name was smeared by the government, which was clearly pro-West and anti-Soviet in its attitude and policies.⁵

The original oil concession granted by Iran, in 1901, established the pattern of 'imperialist' exploitation of Iranian

1. Mihrigān, H. Asnād va Dīdagāhā, Teheran 1981, pp.64-77.

2. Sīmā-yi Mardumī-yi Hizb-i Tūda-yi Īrān, F.M. Javānshir, Teheran n.d., passim.

3. Personal interview, Aug. 5, 1982, with Iskandarī.

4. M. Kumaramangalam, Iran at the Crossroads, People's Publishing House, Bombay 4, 1946.

5. Ibid., ch.2.

oil. It was given quite rashly, for the immediate payment of £400,000, a financial boost to the sorely impoverished Iranian economy. D'Arcy was granted the right to work oil over an area that covered four-fifths of Iranian territory - excluding the North. The concession was sold in 1909 to the newly formed Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which itself was backed by the British government after 1914.

There was thus never a question of the AIOC's integration and sponsorship by local Iranian industry. It was a foreign company, extracting oil purely for British use; no subsidiary industries were established to help build up Iranian industry as a whole, or the national economy.¹

Despite constant conflicts between Britain and Rīzā Shāh over the concession in the South, the central government made repeated overtures to Western companies (Dutch and American²) in regard to oil concessions in the North. This is striking evidence of the pro-Western attitude of the government, for such concessions were in violation of the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921. In very generous terms, the Soviet Union there released Iran from considerable debts; in return, she requested the condition that no country or foreign company should be granted oil concessions in the area which formed her Southern border (Northern Iran).³ The British oil concessions had from the beginning been restricted to the South, but the Soviet Union feared that a Western power might turn oil concessions in the North into an anti-Soviet base.⁴

1. For full details see N. Simpson, The Seven Sisters, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975, pp.70-1.

2. Miller, A.D., "The Influence of Middle East Oil on American Foreign Policy: 1941-48", Middle East Review, Spring 1977 - gives more details of American involvement in Iranian Oil.

3. Ramazani, R.K., The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing Nation in World Affairs 1500-1941, Charlottesville, Va. 1966, pp.139-167, 186-192.

4. For the general effect of this area of history on Anglo-Soviet relations, see Ewalt, D., "The Fight for Oil", in History Today, Sept. 1981, p.11.

This was an accusation that was taken up, in a slightly different form, by the West and others when the Soviet Union approached Iran in 1944 with a request for an oil concession in Northern Iran: allegations were raised that the Soviets intended to annex Iranian territory under the guise of oil concessions. In fact, a comparison of the economic position of the Soviet Union in 1921 and 1944, and of the terms of the British and proposed Soviet oil concessions, cautions against a too easy acceptance of this view.

In 1921, the economic situation of the Soviet Union barred it from extending any sort of help to Iran; in 1944, however, despite the war, she was one of the most industrially developed powers in the world. She was therefore then able to offer aid to Iran in building up the Iranian oil industry; she also badly needed to replete her dangerously low oil stocks on which she had drawn heavily during the war. The integrity of her wish for friendly relations with Iran and the support for an independently strong Iranian nation is shown, at least on paper, by the terms of the concessions which she proposed. The Iranian government was to be given the entire right to control all the economical and technical operations of the company; Iran would keep 50% of the oil produced; Iranians would fill two-thirds of the executive posts, including the highest jobs; Iranian technicians would be trained; and at the end of the concession, all production equipment, machinery, buildings, etc. would pass into the hands of the Iranian government, without any compensation whatsoever.¹

The Tudeh Party's backing of the Soviet request should be examined in the light of this background. The support which it gave to the granting of the Soviet oil concession was based upon the reasonableness of its terms and the benefit it would bring to Iran - not as an automatic response in favour

1. Kumaramangalam, op. cit., pp.17-18.

towards the Soviet Union. The central government on the other hand, took this opportunity provided by the Party to smear the Tudeh's reputation by associating it with the popular concepts of Communism. Thus the Party's confirmation of the Soviet claim that an oil concession would safeguard the security of the Soviet Southern border¹ was distorted by the central government, which insinuated that the Tudeh's aim was actually the Soviet penetration of Iran: did not the Tudeh's own platform state that an economic presence was inevitably followed by political intervention, and did this not constitute a threat to Iran's independence?

The campaign initiated by the central government against the Tudeh's Party's backing of the Soviet request was therefore an anti-Communist one. Further evidence of this inherent anti-Soviet tendency within the central government is found in the manner in which it rejected the Soviet oil concession, after it had initially looked upon it with favour. The Iranian parliament passed a bill introduced by the moderate nationalist, Dr. Muṣaddiq, which called for a moratorium on all concessions to foreign companies until after the end of the war.² Muṣaddiq's stand was an independent one: he genuinely disapproved of oil concessions to both the West and the Soviet Union. This bill formed, however, a very convenient foil for the central government, since it enabled them to refuse the Soviet request without making their pro-Western and anti-Soviet bias explicit. The disguise is shown up very clearly by the clause contained in the 'anti-foreign intrigues' bill that protected already existing concessions, i.e. the operations of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Furthermore, the AIOC concession was even extended by 9 years in April 1944, and additional negotiations with foreign companies were continued

1. A.K.S. Lambton, 'Some of the Problems facing Persia', International Affairs 21 (1946), 254; Special letter to the Hamrahān Party's members 8, 1944 .

2. Ibid., p. 264.

and were expected to go through successfully.¹

There is thus a clear correlation between the central government's pro-Western policy and its anti-Soviet and anti-Tudeh attitude. The former can be explained in terms of the traditional British (and Western) preservation of the status quo of the Iranian ruling class, whereby their oil concessions in the South could be kept secure. Support for the West meant the maintenance, therefore, of the government.²

Although the Tudeh Party's role in the issue of the oil concession to the Soviet Union must be viewed without the prejudicial government propaganda smears, and therefore judged on less secure grounds than those normally applied, it nevertheless could have adapted more efficient measures and taken better precautionary action. The presence of a Soviet military contingent, for example, during the demonstrations organised by the Party gave substance to the allegations that the Tudeh were preparing for, or at least favoured, Soviet intervention in Iranian affairs.³

The Tudeh Party might also have benefitted more from a policy which was directed towards the abolition of British oil rights in the South, instead of expending much energy in support of the Soviet Union from which they gained little result. Another pattern might have emerged if they had pursued a non-dynamic balance.⁴ The Party claimed that it did not possess the power to fight the British and would thus have had little chance of realising that goal. This was not true, however, for during the war the authority of the central

1. Simpson, op. cit., ch.6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ra^cd-i Imrūz 337, 1944.

4. Sulṭānzāda, Asnād-i Tārīkh-i Junbish-i Kārgarī, Sūsyāl-Dimūkrāsī va Kumūnistī-ye Īrān, Paris 1973, vol.III, pp.196-220.

5. K. Ustavān, Siyāsāt-i Muvāzana-yi Manfī dar Majlis-i Charhārdahum, vol.II, passim, Teheran, 1957.

government was weakened, and the Tudeh had widespread influence within it. Anti-British popular sentiment was running high at the time: the hatred felt against the British for their role in bringing Rīzā Shāh to power was fuelled by their occupation of Iran.¹

The claim that an oil concession would safeguard the Soviet-Iranian border was perhaps an over-statement. Iran, being so weak, could scarcely constitute a threat, and the Soviet army was then considerably more powerful than the British forces, if they were afraid of an attack by the British.

It might be said that in contradistinction to Dr. Muṣaddiq's 'negative equilibrium' policy, the Tudeh Party followed that of 'positive equilibrium'. This laid them open to mounting propaganda that the Party was a front for Soviet interests and activities, especially in view of their support for the Soviet oil concession. It was indeed one of the weaknesses of the Tudeh Party, which a later reactionary government used to bring about the collapse of the Party.

The political turmoil and the internal conflicts within parliament caused by the question of concessions, sponsored by combined Soviet and Tudeh pressure, led to the fall of Sa^cīd's government in November 1944. In a letter to Muḥammad Rīzā Shāh² Sa^cīd declared that although he enjoyed the support of many of the members of parliament, he was resigning both as a result of Tudeh (plus Soviet) propaganda, especially protests from Rasht and Tabriz, against him, and in the hope that by his resignation the conflicts would be resolved, and the friction and differences be ironed out. He was succeeded by Murtaẓā Bayāt, a popular choice, but it took 11 days before his appointment was confirmed due to the general confusion and

1. Sultānzāda, *op. cit.*, vol.III, pp.196-220.

2. Special letter to the Hamrāhān Party's Members 8, 1944.

argument.¹

The Tudeh supported Bayāt and his administration in its initial days,² but the new government swung to the right early in 1945. The new premier did not grant favours, as most previous governments had done, and many of which had fallen because of lack of support from the conservative deputies. Bayāt, too, was too weak to withstand the opposition, much of which arose from British suspicion of the government's Soviet leanings (Sayyid Żiyā opposed him for the same reason), and his government was dissolved. The next administration formed in Spring 1945 by Muhsin Šadr, also moved to the right, arousing fears that the Soviet Union might not respect the withdrawal deadline of March 2, 1946. Šadr reacted to the militant stance of the Tudeh over the question of the oil concessions in the Spring of 1945 by closing the communist headquarters and suspending all newspapers. This formed the backdrop to the ensuing struggle in Azerbaijan³ and Kurdistan, between the Tudeh, the Soviet Union, and the Iranian government.

(3) TRADE UNIONS AND THE TUDEH PARTY

The fragmentary activity of both Trade Union and Communist groups during the first two decades of the twentieth century was eventually co-ordinated and organised into the Central Council of Federated Trade Unions in 1921. The Council produced its own newspaper called Haqīqat (Truth) and restructured the regional unions of small groups - such as textile and oil workers, as well as arranging demonstrations and strikes. The unions mainly represented small, less-developed trades - only 6 unions out of 32 were in progressive

1. Special letter to the Hamrāhān Party's Members 8, 1944.

2. Ra^cd-i Imrūz 3-78, 1945.

3. See following chapters below.

industry. Rīzā Shāh ruthlessly suppressed all of the unions' activities in 1926 (5 of their leaders died in prison), but his economic measures which included road construction, the building of railways, ports and factories, acted as a spur to the remnant of the movement, since these modernized methods increased the industrial labour force fifty-fold.

The growth of the proletariat was also assisted by the 50% expansion of the oil-related work-force and the amalgamation of small workshops to form larger units; by 1941 hereby industry alone employed 170,000 workers. The conditions under which they laboured, however, were appalling, resembling slave labour. With no organised unions, workers' reaction was very disjointed and most often on a spontaneous basis. For example, a strike called at the Abadan oil refinery to demand better conditions resulted not only in an agreed wage increase, but also drew a British gunboat and 500 arrests. This 'transitional' period was one that weakened union activity, since it meant the loss of a personal relationship between workers and employers, which led to the disappearance of moral responsibility on the part of the owners for the working people, while no substitute had been created to replace the old system.

Behind the movement however were leaders who truly believed in socialism - including Pīshavārī. From its formal formation in 1941, the Tudeh encouraged the Trade Unions which supported this movement. The Party was the political expression of the communist revival, set up by the Arānī Circle,¹ who were ex-prisoners, and its aims, under its opposition to colonial imperialism, were directed towards the restructuring of the political economy in a democratic form.²

1. Zabih, op. cit.

2. Demonstrated by a provisional statute; see Zabih, p.74.

Thus the Central Council of Trades Unions represented an attempt by experienced trade unionists together with Tehran workers to rebuild the unions. The labour-emphasis of the Party increased its support throughout Iran, especially in the textile-dominated areas around Isfahan, where much demand was made for improved wages and conditions. The Tudeh succeeded in transforming aggrieved workers into a considerable political force and during 1942-3, unionist tactics widened popular support, with each victory strengthening the movement's appeal.

Although the elections of 1943-4 left the Tudeh with only 8 out of 120 seats, efficient organisation and unique backing from a mass political movement proved a great source of support. The Central Council of United Trades Unions (CCUTU) grew to 200,000 strong within a year and 400,000 by 1946.¹ The struggle became somewhat more bitter² during the inflationary period in the four years to 21st March, 1945. Fifteen years before, a strike in the largest textile mill in Isfahan had ended with the imprisonment of the leaders, and in the Khuzistan oil fields, first affected in 1922, a general strike in 1929 had paralysed the industry, and five of its instigators were still in prison in 1941.³ This four year period saw Isfahan plagued with strikes and a lockout which drove starving workers into factories and granaries. The rising was quelled in July 1943 by Bakhtiyārī and Qashqā'ī tribesmen on government orders. The oil-fields avoided much of the trouble as the trades union movement respected the Allies' efforts against the Axis powers. The first activities of the underground movement were not until May 1946, despite its existence in Khuzistan for some length of time previously; the CCUTU had been or was a stabilising factor, an encouraging

1. Abrahāmian, Social Basis of Iranian Politics, Tudeh Party 1941-53.

2. Ibid.; E. Sykes, 'Isfahan', Journal of Central Asian Soc., vol.33, 1946.

3. Cf. Abrahāmian, op. cit., and Zabih, op. cit.

influence upon the war-effort and denouncing walk-outs and wage disputes. This spread to other regions as well, - especially manufacturing plants in Tabriz, the textile and coal industries and railways in Gīlān and Māzandarān, in Tehran's light industry, in the mills of Isfahan, Shīrāz and Yazd, and in the Khuzistan oil fields. The unions in these centres, whose members numbered tens of thousands by 1946, also sponsored strikes as early as 1942, and in 1946 were supporting several general strikes.

Contrary to Lenczowski's view¹ that many misguided individuals realized the truth, when the Tudeh pressed home the Soviet position during the 1944 crisis in the oil industry, Ibrahimian offers opposing evidence, on Constitution Day, 1945, of 20 mass meetings. The one in Tehran alone drew 40,000 people in May 1946; 80,000 people marched in Abadan alone;² and in October 1946, 100,000 people celebrated 5 years of the Party's existence in Tehran, and American estimates set communist support at 40%.³

The march in Abadan ultimately led to a three-week strike, beginning in Āghā Jārī on May 14th. This was preceded by a strike on April 15th, during which the General Manager conceded the demand for the reinstatement of 7 workers made by the 2000 strikers and the plant manager had a change of attitude. At the same time, a wage demand for double pay was put forward at Gach Sārān. The Tudeh's influence among the workers* was demonstrated in early June, when they organised to construct a barrier around Khorramshahr to prevent its submergence by floods. Although the oil company in Abadan

1. G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-48, New York 1949, p.234.

2. (London)Times, July 16, 1946; J. Jones, 'My visit to the Persian oil fields', IRCAS 34, 1947.

3. New York Times, June 15, 1946, quoted in Ibrahimian, op. cit.

4. FO 371 file IP.52723 Telegram, Willoughby to Le Rougetel, Aug. 10.

gave technical advice, they were unable to control the workforce as were the Tudeh, who commandeered company vehicles and regulated traffic, etc.¹ The workers at Āghā Jārī were agitating for improved housing as far back as 1938, and the strike in which 10,000 men participated in May was in support of demands for medical facilities, the provision of midwives, ice and drinking-water, special allowances, and Friday pay. The company, adopting a stiff attitude, called for military intervention (which was made available) on the grounds of the political nature of the demands, and the drastic step of cutting off the vital water supply. A government commission was able to persuade the company to settle, however, and in fact it (the company) paid the workers wages for the duration of the strike: an unprecedented act which was nevertheless disguised as a beneficial payment *ex gratia* to its employees. This had the effect, naturally, of encouraging other workers to adopt similar action.

Isfahan at this time was a city of some significance, having alone escaped the two-pronged Allied invasion and having suffered various strikes earlier the same year. The workers in Isfahan came out in sympathy with those striking at Āghā Jārī, and a procession estimated at 7000 took place. A success here would clearly have been indigenous, i.e. free from Allied intervention. The Tudeh's influence in the mills and town advanced considerably with the appointment of a Tudeh supporter to the post of Governor-General. It was also affirmed by a series of shorter strikes - at an Ahwāz spinning factory on June 3rd, at the port of Bandar-i Shahpūr on June 6th, and in the Abadan bazaar on June 11th, as well as such unionist backwaters as Būshahr. The union was in fact recognised as a result of the Ītimādiyya mills strike of June 11-17th.

1. FO 371 etc., op. cit.

On July 8th came the alarming incident of a meeting of ^cAlī Umīd with 40 non-commissioned officers from the Ahwāz garrison, and on the 13th, the CCUTU demanded from the AIOC the recall of the Governor-General of Khūzīstan, Miṣbāh Fātimī, the disarmament of the tribes, an end to the AIOC's interference in internal Iranian affairs, and wages for Fridays. With only an hour's notice, 22,000 men from the refinery alone (excluding those in essential services) struck at 6.00am. It was a very well organised and peaceful affair. The strike-leaders, who effectively controlled Khurramshahr, commandeered transport and confined Europeans to their homes; committees for food, and security and propaganda were set up under a Directing Committee. Meanwhile, martial law was declared and police and gendarmerie forces were reinforced. Telegrams were sent to the party heads of Tehran adding to the previous demands for better conditions of employment and living standards in general.

The reply was a promise that the Chief of Staff guaranteed no further military intervention.¹ At 5.00pm, local Arabs opposed to the strike clashed with demonstrators marching past the HQ of the Arab Union, and an Arab merchant who was a contractor for the AIOC was killed. The violence swelled, during which a second Arab contractor died (both bodies were mutilated²), and shooting began, involving fire by troops, and lasted until late into the evening: in all a total of 25 people were killed, and 173 injured.

The Arabs had secret encouragement from local officials: it is known that a consultation with the Sheikhs was held on the 14th; the Governor-General considered arming them and the next day, suggested that the Arabs should set fire to the Tudeh HQ and assemble their tribesmen, who were already

1. FO 371, op. cit.

2. Clarmont Skrine, World War in Iran, London 1962; see later.

gathering. The left-wing Iranian press, with substantial Soviet press support, accused the British and the AIOC of conspiracy, although this was unlikely to have been true.

The British Ambassador warned the Consul of Khurramshahr against interference with the Arabs, and suggested that similar advice be given to the AIOC:¹ the British were determined to give no grounds for accusations against them on such an account - on July 27, the Arabs indeed claimed that the British had restrained them from acts of vengeance,² and on the 15th, counsellor Sir Clarmont Skrine, in an investigation of the Indian artisans' grievances, also urged restraining of Arab retaliation on the Governor;³ the latter, Major Fātiḥ, was probably using the Arabs to pressurise the government. On Willoughby's arrival in Abadan, he warned that if Prince Muzaffar Fīrūz ordered the release of the Tudeh ringleaders, Arabs might retaliate with the murder of all Persians, regardless of whether they were members of the Tudeh or not, and this was borne out by the war-like assembly of Arabs at the Governor's house. The central government was torn between a desire to carry out the British recommendation that it assert its authority, and its wish to avoid alienating the Soviet Union and much Iranian support by treating the Tudeh Party and Iranian nationals too harshly. They decided upon sending reinforcements to the Governor-General on July 15, together with a telegram ordering the arrest of Tudeh members, and the drawing up of a list of suspected agitators to be passed on to the government, who would either arrest or expel them from Khūzistān. Prime Minister Qavām instructed the Governor-General to use discretionary measures to prevent further disturbances. Miṣbāḥ Fāṭimī remarked to Mr. Northcroft of the Company, that this was not the expected propitiation of

1. FO 371, 52718, Le Rougetel to Willoughby, July 14.

2. FO 371, 52723 Willoughby to Le Rougetel, July 27.

3. FO 371, 52719 Willoughby to Le Rougetel, July 15.

the Tudeh, regardless of cost, but he was in fact proved wrong within a few days.¹ Firstly, a delegation which included Muzaffar Fīrūz on the Prime Minister's behalf, Rādmanish, acting Minister of Commerce, and 3 Tudeh members, arrived on July 15. They inspected the damage, interviewed many of the wounded, and released some of the strike leaders. Fīrūz then called a meeting with the AIOC to discuss ways of ending the strike: this strange meeting took place with the government delegation and AIOC leaders in one room, and five strike leaders with Iskandarī and some others as mediators in another. The AIOC had made some minor concessions over pay of Friday wages, and by 1.00am it was agreed that the strike would end at dawn.² The AIOC resented the Tudeh's management of the issue, and wished to break the leaders of the Union, a move which, apart from being undiplomatic, would have helped neither the Company, nor the closely-linked British Government.

By this time, fear of the Arabs had killed the strike, and all that was being sought was the release of imprisoned Tudeh leaders, and extrication of the Party by attaching blame to the British and Arabs.³ Fīrūz, according to Skrine,⁴ tried to persuade the AIOC that some concessions on their part would end the strike, for which they were partly responsible, claiming that he himself had ordered the end of the supposedly 'illegal' strike. Release of Tudeh leaders was useless, he said. In the meantime, however, he told Tudeh members elsewhere that the Prime Minister was indeed urging an end to the strike, promising release and assistance towards the defeat of Fāṭimi and Fāṭih, and in holding the British and Arabs responsible for the violence which had occurred, he also

1. FO 371, 52721, Willoughby to Le Rougetel, July 15.

2. Clarmont Skrine, op. cit., p.244.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

threatened them that they would be embarrassed, and the Party would collapse when the workers returned to work voluntarily.

That same night, Fīrūz also warned the Sheikhs of Khorramshahr from instigating further disturbances, and the next morning assured 30,000 workers in Abadan of Qavām's interest in their welfare, as well as the Company's good intentions. The work-force returned to work on July 17, with no damage to AIOC property or installations, and a week's production was the only thing lost. Qavām also received, at the same time, a congratulatory message from the British Foreign Office, stating how successful had been the efforts of the Governor-General and the authorities in maintaining peace. The day following, the British Ambassador tried on the Government's behalf to stem the tide of representation arriving from Tehran, which threatened political stability.¹ Le Rougetel reported to the Foreign Office the anti-authoritarian and non-industrial nature of the strike, and Qavām's apparent inability to exercise governmental authority in Khūzistān, and enforce his will over Fīrūz and others - hence the situation was still 'incalculable'.² Le Rougetel recognised the undesirability of Fīrūz who was the main obstacle to any improvement: this was in accord with the US Ambassador, Allen, who warned against any hasty counter-productive action.

On July 23, Col. Zargāmī of the War Ministry, Tūraj-Amīn, and two officials from the Ministry of Justice, arrived to investigate the causes of the riots. According to Le Rougetel,³ this was a pro-Tudeh commission, who distorted the evidence to show that the disorders were due to the British, and the AIOC, who were also responsible for organising Arab resistance against the central government and

1. FO 371, 52719; FO to Le Rougetel, July 18.

2. Ibid.

3. FO 371, 52706 doc. no.12322, Le Rougetel to Bevin, Oct. 20.

the Tudeh Party.

The Tudeh were particularly popular with the Union movement at that time, and the British were consequently especially anxious to counteract their influence through the creation of an oil workers union.¹ By July 14, the British were negotiating with the Tudeh, which nonetheless did not prevent the strike breaking out. Indeed, the major contributory factor for the strike was the party's fear that the British sought to destroy the CCUTU through repression, or incitement of the Arabs. When the strike ended, the Company had agreed to pay a minimum daily rate of 35 rials, including wages for the rest day (Friday). It was pointed out to the Prime Minister that this agreement, costing £1 million per year to the Company, was in violation of the Labour Law, which laid down that wages were to be fixed by the High Labour Council. British workers in the Company, as well as politicians and experts, complained that the Company was badly organised and needed strengthening and more discipline, and this call was taken up by the British Foreign Office. The Labour Cabinet was forced to choose between improving conditions in order to stem Tudeh influence, and its ideology, which of course, espoused the Union movement.

The British response also extended to the posting of two Navy ships to Abadan, off the Shatt al-^CArab, an act to which the Iranian government reacted with suspicion, declaring it to be an unfriendly act if it was connected with the strike, and the Iranian press was similarly hostile. Foreign Secretary Bevin considered the evacuation of British and Indian personnel, or alternatively occupation of the area to maintain continued production.² Plans were mooted to send Indian

1. For more details see: Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil: a study in power politics, London 1955.

2. July 11 Memorandum from Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs, E. Bevin; The Situation in S. Persia, CAB 129 vol.11 CP (46), p.269.

troops to Basra, within easy reach of Abadan, the present threat to the city being seen as more important than an Egyptian or Iraqi reaction. The risk was also considered to outweigh the possibility of Soviet intervention. The move would be disguised under the pretext of the replacement of British troops awaiting repatriation. The troop dispatch was announced as a precautionary measure of protection for the AIOC, which gave rise to much concern within the Iranian government and press over the mention of protection of Arab lives, a reference probably inserted by the British to appease Iraq. Iranian demands for the removal of the troops were met with reassurances from the British that they had full confidence in the government's authority. Indeed, the presence of the Indian forces increased popular support and greater official influence in the area, as well as that of the Company and the Arabs. The discordant note between the Indian claim to have a safeguarding role, and the Foreign Office statement that they were replacement troops was in fact picked up by the State Department in Washington, who were afraid of a violation of the UN Charter. The action, according to Iran, was a threat to her security, the prestige of the government, and also a weakening influence on the UN. America forestalled an Iranian outcry in the Security Council, but avoided taking on the role of mediator with Britain.¹

By this stage, the Tudeh was finding it necessary to convince its supporters through publications that it was not merely making political capital out of a communal antagonism, but that it in fact favoured the Arabs, and all provincial minorities.² Iraq was entertaining hopes that Khūzistān might become part of Iraq, and this idea was formulated by the Arab League early in August. Antagonism toward the Tudeh in Khūzistān was primarily tribal, with the Sheikhs forming the

1. FO 371, 52723, Washington to FO, Aug. 13.

2. Zafar, July 30, 1946; quoted in Ibrahimian, op. cit.

tribally tight-knit Arab community into the Sa^cd Party, in opposition to the Tudeh, whose appeal was principally to non-Arab wage earners. British relations with Iraq further strengthened her feelings of protectiveness towards the Arabs in Iran as well, so that the combination of all these factors encouraged the nationalist element of the Tudeh's attitude, with a strong anti-immigration polemic, and accusations against Khūzistān that it was seeking independence and of conspiracy between Britain and Iraq.

Whereas the British had previously turned to the Tudeh Party in the South, they now began to strengthen Qavām's position in order to prevent Soviet infiltration and hence the Tudeh's power. On June 29, Qavām formed the Democrat Party to contest the general election and defeat the Tudeh¹ and towards this end he enlisted the support of some former Tudeh organisers. When he invited the party to send a representative to the Cabinet they despatched three of their best members - Īraj Iskandarī, Faraydūn Kishāvarz, and Murtażā Yazdī. In spite of their hostility, the Tudeh supported Qavām in order to to achieve three goals: one, to combat imperialism; two, to resolve their differences; and three, to increase the chances of democracy.² Much reform was initiated through the work of Iskandarī as Minister of Economy, Kishāvarz as Education Secretary and Yazdī in the Department of Health, and indeed, the coalition significantly strengthened Qavām. However, it is important to notice that Qavām's ulterior motive in inviting Tudeh co-operation was to undermine the Party's influence in the union movement as a means to control labour unrest.

A period of turbulence ensued following upon the end of the strike, including the suppression of the trades unions in the South by the British and the central government. The

1. Binder, *op. cit.*, p.206.

2. Rahbar, supplementary issue, Summer 1946, 6.

Tudeh's objections about this to Qavām fell on deaf ears as he was in fact one of its instigators. In that year, there were also disturbances in the Fārs region in which many people were killed. Many party members, including the Tudeh, recommended to the government that it should crush the rebellion and maintain the integrity of Iran. The revolt seems to have been a plot between the British and Iranian governments, and when the central government concluded peace with the tribes and called it a 'patriotic revolution', the Tudeh was incensed. Due to this, and other reasons, an official split opened between the coalition: Qavam argued that the Democrat Party ought to have a body which would supervise the approaching general election, but it was clear that this was an idea designed to prevent the election of the Tudeh. In the ensuing break, the three Tudeh ministers refused to attend Parliament, and the coalition collapsed.¹ Qavām's attitude towards the communist movement suddenly shifted, and all union activity - in particular the strike in Tehran on Nov. 12 - was stopped, and hundreds of union and party members were arrested throughout the country. The party press was disbanded, and none of the Tudeh's members were safe with the threat of prison and other oppressive measures hanging over them, while at the same time their freedom of meeting was restricted which virtually curtailed all their activities. There were several reasons behind this policy: Firstly, the Tudeh had tried in the interval of some years after World War II to awaken the political awareness of Iranians with respect to their rights. The central government was naturally apprehensive of too much popular knowledge, since it would expose their repressive methods. Secondly, it knew that the Tudeh was almost sure to win the elections to the 15th Majlis, and so determined to discredit the Party's leadership, and warn the population against the dangers of a communist régime. It was not alone in this attitude, since other "imperialist" governments, like the

1. Bayāniyya-yi Kumīta-yi Markazī-yi Hizb-i Tūda, Summer 1946.

British or American, were also anti-communist. Thirdly, Qavām needed to increase his personal popularity, which was at a low ebb, and he thus justified his orders for mass arrests by claiming that he was protecting the country from such communist threats.

While Qavām's policy may have been effective in Tehran, it was still necessary to subdue the provinces. One example of the government's methods was the imposition of martial law in Māzandarān, where army and police officers were moved in, occupying all the towns en route from Tehran, and many people were arrested, tortured and killed.¹ The excuse given was the country-wide one day railway strike.

The Tudeh's complaints reached the interenational Trades Unions' Federation through the channels of the press, and the Federation wrote in strong protest to the central government, advising them that this was an action in violation of their treaty with the Allied powers. The Iranian government, seeking to retain its prestige, invited a delegation from the Federation: the commission at once saw through the design of the government, and recognised the fact that the ruling Democrat Party had no popular base in Iran, since the workers supported the Trades Union movement and the Tudeh Party.²

Following the repression instigated by Qavām, the Tudeh went underground, although their electoral candidates, such as A. Qāsimī in Gurgan, were arrested. In a press interview, Qavām, answering questions concerning the Party, said that the Tudeh was frightened of the common people, who did not want the Communist Party in Iran.³ The government's condemnation of the Party as responsible for the creation of a class-struggle

1. Shamshīr-i Imrūz, Bayāniyya-yi Kumīta-yi Markazī-yi Hizb-i Tudeh, Autumn 1946.

2. Ibid.

3. Shamshīr-i Imrūz, op. cit.

was inaccurate, since in fact aggravation of the class conflict was the result of the dictatorship of Rīzā Shāh, who made the majority poorer, and a minority richer.

The Tudeh Party in reality failed because of the ignorance of the population, their willingness to believe the central government, and the weakness of the democratic process in Iran, and it took five years for the Tudeh Party to finally reorganise itself.¹

(4) THE PLATFORM OF THE TUDEH PARTY

The elements of the Tudeh's party platform can be outlined as follows:

1. Man's right to internal freedom and independence:

This was seen as the right to struggle against foreign imperialism and colonization which threatened Iran's integrity, and her right to choose her own destiny.

Economic as well as political independence was called for: economic dependence upon another power, the Tudeh believed necessarily entailed political domination by that power, so that control within Iran should be solely in the hands of Iranian nationals.

Despite this clear indication of strong nationalist feeling, the party's opponents² claimed that the Tudeh was pressing for the subsuming of Iran into the Soviet Union, in an effort to discredit the party. That the Tudeh did share Marxist-Leninist doctrines with the Soviet government did not mean, however, that they wanted either political intervention or domination

1. Rahbar, suppl. Bayāniyya-yi Kumīta-yi Markazī-yi Hizb-i Tūda, Mar. 1946.

2. Sayr-i Kumūnist Dar Īrān, Govt. pub., Teheran.

by the Soviet Union in Iran's internal affairs.¹

2. The establishment of democratic role and the protection of the rights of the individual:

True democracy would balance the economic status of all Iranians, as well as improving Iran's political system. Democracy did not exist at the present time, contrary to claims made to that effect, because the landowners found it easy to pressure the poverty-stricken peasants to vote for candidates of their choice, and those living in towns accepted bribes in order to supplement their very meagre incomes.

The Tudeh also urged the recognition of basic rights such as freedom of speech, press, movement etc. within society, as the necessary foundation for a political system. The use of such rights must, however, be regulated by and conform to the Constitutional Law: Law 13 with respect to the press, and 21 related to the freedom of movement.

This emphasis upon the importance and centrality of observance of the Constitutional Law is a major feature in the Tudeh's platform.²

3. Dedication to the struggle against dictatorship:

The Tudeh included in this the fight against the opportunist élite whose support was responsible for the maintenance of a dictator's rule. The 15 year dictatorial rule of Riżā Shāh, for example, was made possible only through the co-operation and aid of a corrupt army and body of landowners, so the Tudeh believed.³

1. Barnāma-yi Hizb-i Tūda-yi Īrān, Tehran, 1981.

2. Guzashta Chirāgh-i Rāh-i Āyanda Ast, Tehran, pp.134-138; Asnād wa Dīdagāhā, Tehran 1981, p.143.

3. Ibid.

4. Cleansing and purification of the police system and civilian corruption:

Corruption amongst both police and civilian elements was regarded by the Tudeh as a result of Riżā Shāh's dictatorship. A supreme court should be set up to deal with such offenders, with power to return property and money gained by this extortion.¹

5. Separation of civil and criminal law administration, and the abolition of all legislation passed by Riżā Shāh:

This inclusion was designed to limit the power of Riżā Shāh and his police. The Tudeh referred to articles 27 and 28 of the Constitutional Law which stated that all legislation inimical to the interests of the people was forbidden: they saw in the Constitutional Law a higher legislative authority than that invested in or held by the Shāh.²

Although comprehensive abolition was called for, the Tudeh's primary concern was for a repeal of the 1931 propaganda law, a repeal which would accord them a legal existence and the right to stand for election.³

6. Abolition of conscription abuses:

The ending of improper exploitation of soldiers as house servants and manual workers for the officers, and the extension of their legal rights to include military training and maintenance grants during the period of their service.⁴

1. Difā'iyyāt-i Duktur Arānī, p.47.

2. At his trial, Dr. Arānī referred to this corruption of the police.

3. Qāsimī, op. cit., p.30; Asnād wa Dīdagāhā, p.143.

4. Iskandarī: personal interview, Tehran, Aug. 1982.

7. Improved use of land, and better conditions for the peasantry:

The Tudeh believed that a lack of incentive, due to the fact that the peasants possessed no share in the land which they worked, combined with primitive tools and methods, were responsible for the unproductive state of agriculture in Iran. The party offered two solutions:

- (a) government redistribution among the peasants of the large estates of wealthy landowners and those owned by Riżā Shāh;
- (b) the foundation of a bank designed to extend loans for mortgages, and the purchase of more sophisticated equipment.

The government should also fund and install wells and irrigation systems to forestall the frequent threats posed by droughts; and set up health and education facilities to enable the peasants to increase their work hours and efficiency, and benefit from technological advances made in other countries. If all this was carried through, agricultural output would jump, aiding the economy by reducing imports and supplying goods for export. This was, in fact, a very progressive, humanitarian and nationalist policy.¹

8. The welfare of the workers:

In 1943, no law existed which protected workers' rights, and the Tudeh thus set out an eight-point bill which they urged should be passed:

- (a) a maximum working day of 8 hours

1. Dunya, vol.9, 1963; Dunya, vol.12, 1975.

- (b) overtime wages to be paid for time over and above that limit
- (c) responsibility of the employer for any medical costs incurred as a result of an injury sustained by an employee at work
- (d) entitlement of workers to a specified number of paid weeks' holiday per year
- (e) entitlement of each worker to a pension upon retirement
- (f) no child under 14 to be legally permitted to work
- (g) equal pay for male and female employees
- (h) 2 months paid post-natal absence for all female workers.¹

The Tudeh worked widely amongst the working classes to awaken their class consciousness, encouraging them to fight for their rights by establishing a trade union movement, and urging them to support the Tudeh as the only party concerned for their welfare. Their party platform indeed makes clear how deeply committed to the workers' cause the Tudeh party actually was, a point illustrated particularly by their concern for female workers, an especially vulnerable group.

9. Organisation of the labour force:

The fragmentary nature of cottage industry in Iran was harmful to the workers' conditions, so the Tudeh believed, and they accordingly encouraged the formation of unions, to remove the need for exploiting middlemen between the workers and consumers, giving the employees themselves more control over their work situation.²

10. Reform in civil service legislation:

Fundamental changes were required to reform the

1. Qāsimī, Hizb-i Tūda chi mīgūyad va-chi mīkhvāhad, Tehran 1943, pp.62-81.

2. Ibid., p.82.

administration of the civil service: there was a large wage inequality which worked against the junior staff, who thus commonly accepted bribes, thereby corrupting the civil service administration, nor was discrimination made for those employees with large families to support. The Tudeh urged for a similar trade union movement to be set up, and also demanded that more educated currently unemployed young men be employed by the civil service.¹

11. Equal social, economic and political opportunities for women:

The Tudeh party was the only partly genuinely interested in a comprehensive improvement in the status of women in Iran. Women were exploited by the male society because of their economic dependence; the Tudeh aimed at establishing women's independence, leading towards a more humanitarian society. The employment of women would on the one hand create this independence, and on the other, would in the long run benefit the Iranian economy since the number of those working would be dramatically increased.²

12. Fundamental reform in education and health services:

The Tudeh saw education and health services as a basic human right and as such it was the responsibility of the government to promote them: free and compulsory education up to a secondary level, with the inclusion of both art and political science in the curriculum (also at university level); a national health service covering the entire country, available to all on request.

1. Qāsimī, op. cit., pp.83-90; A. Iskandarī: personal interview, Tehran, Aug. 1982.

2. A. Iskandarī: personal interview, Tehran, Aug. 1982.

13. Reform of the tax laws:

Social equality is the necessary foundation of society, and a fair distribution of tax impositions should require proportionately more from the wealthy than from the poor. Bribery of tax officials by the rich should be stopped.

Linked with this, the Tudeh advocated a nationalised industry - otherwise, the profits accrued in private business went into the pockets of individuals, and not into the state treasury from which the whole country received support.

Government should also subsidise staple foods and provide mortgages, while at the same time setting up co-operative schemes whereby the working class could purchase low-priced goods.

(5) THE ORGANISATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE TUDEH PARTY: 1941-47

Even in an embryonic stage, the Tudeh party created an extremely efficient organisation, which proved a firm foundation upon which to develop. Although it attracted many fee-paying members, its influence extended far beyond these, while they remained its core.

The conditions for membership were three-fold: any candidate of Iranian birth, over the age of 23,¹ and who accepted the party manifesto was eligible. He was thereupon required to produce a written recommendation to the party signed by two party members, there thence admitted for a 6 months probationary period, during which he was expected to demonstrate his loyalty and enthusiasm for the party. If his behaviour satisfied the party he was then made a full member.

1. A youth organisation existed for those below this age.

His first obligation as an official member was attendance at all cell meetings and payment of membership fees: 30 rials for men, 15 rials for women and young people, monthly. Within the party, a feeling of unity, together with strict adherence to the regulations was fostered, and all members were expected to acquire such methods and knowledge as was necessary for the fight against the enemies of the party, and to actively engage in propaganda activity in their immediate environment.¹

Each member had the right to vote and stand for election for any post within any organisation of the party structure.² He also shared in policy decision-making, participating in the group discussions held for that purpose, and was free to raise objections against either a particular point or person. Praiseworthy behaviour - enlisting mass support or gaining financial aid, for instance - was encouraged by verbal or written commendation, while conversely, measures leading to expulsion could be taken against detrimental activity: disciplinary measures were taken against non-attendance of cell meetings, non-payment of fees, false accusations against fellow members, or creating factions within the party; expulsion could be enacted in the case of traitors who betrayed the party. There was, however, a right of appeal against expulsion, taken before the National Congress, which set up a special commission of investigation.³

The organisation of the Tudeh was founded upon democracy, and conformity to the party line, as expressed through a chain of authority. This chain represented the various levels of gradation, from the single cell unit through to the central committee of the party - the structure of all Communist organisations; the Tudeh similarly multiplied

1. Asnād wa Dīdagāhā, pp.148-9.

2. Ibid., pp.148-9.

3. Ibid., pp.151-2.

committees etc. in order to reach as many people, of varied class and background as possible.

The cell (ḥawza) forms the active centre of the party structure. It operates with a minimum of 3 persons, and is the place where plans are made, and the party line and doctrine expounded; its meetings were normally held in the work-places of its members - schools, factories, etc. A secretary, responsible for the functioning of the cell, was elected every 6 months.

Where a number of cells exist in a localised area, delegates from each are elected onto a co-ordinating committee, which in turn elects 5 delegates yearly to the local committee, the executive organ of the party in that area. Above the local committees are the regional committees which cover districts or even provinces. These are made up of either 7 or 15 delegates elected from the local committees every 2 years. Meetings of these committees are held quarterly, when a report for the past 4 months is given, and an outline for the next presented. Also present is a delegate from the central committee, who informs the members of policy developments to which they are expected to conform.

The supreme organ of the party is its National Congress. This meets every two years to discuss top level party policy, with a view to adapting or changing it if necessary, and to elect a Central Committee. At the first National Congress of the Tudeh, in August 1944,¹ it elected 11 members to this Committee, and set up at the same time a nine-member Control Committee, - a political bureau - to replace the office of President, and a three-member Secretariat, which was reduced to one general secretary in 1946 to facilitate the work of organisation.

1. For more details see Asnād wa Dīdagāhā, Tehran 1981, pp.64-77.

The party also established its own publishing house: the leadership, while realising that the press was the most effective means of propaganda for gaining support and spreading the party's influence, were rather shortsighted, however, in their indifference to the fact that the readership was limited to intellectuals living in Tehran (where most of the publications were produced); even if the newspapers were distributed throughout other cities, there was a 77% illiteracy level among the very people they were hoping to influence. Despite this, a continuous stream of publications flowed out, starting with *Siyāsat*, issued a few weeks after the party's reception in 1941. *Siyāsat* was succeeded by a new organ after the Tehran Conference, when a special section for publication was created. In 1943, the daily *Rahbar* was started, but was replaced by *Razm* when *Rahbar* was censored by the government - this immediate substitution being a standard procedure of the party. The official papers of the party were, as a rule, published clandestinely. Thus, through its own publications, and also through those who supported the Tudeh party line, such as *Nabard*, *Āzhīr*, *Farmān*, *Īrān-i mā*, *Daryā*, *Damāvand*, *Najāt-i Īrān*, ^c*Alī Bābā*, *Ārmān-i Millī*, *Ẓafar*, *Shu^clavar*, *Tawfīq*, *Umīd*, and *Mīhan Parastān*¹ - the party exerted extensive influence both over and through the Iranian press.

The areas of the Tudeh's most intense activity were: the North - the provinces of Azerbaijan, Gīlān and Māzandarān (as well as Isfahan), because of their proximity to the Soviet Union; the South, where the Anglo-Iranian oil fields were situated, as the party was eager to foster nationalist feelings amongst the Iranian workers against the 'imperialist' British; and naturally, in the capital, Tehran.

In spite of concentrated effort in these Northern provinces, however, the Tudeh had an only limited success. The peasants

1. *Ra^cd-i Imrūz* 375.

in these areas were largely ignorant and illiterate and easily manipulated by the wealthy landlords antagonistic to communism. The tribes, too, were a stubborn element; in the North, they were almost solidly for the Shah - as the *Shāh Savan* (Lovers of the Shah) tribe in Azerbaijan exemplifies; while in the South, they were under the thumb of the British, who manipulated them with financial and moral support and threatened them into resistance to the Tudeh's successes, which, as a result, was virtually nil.

The party had somewhat greater success among the minorities living within Iran - the Armenians, Kurds, Assyrians etc. It promised them equal rights and status with native-born Iranians, but it was still in Azerbaijan, the province most heavily affected by the Soviet occupations that they had most influence; this was substantiated later on, when in 1945 the Azerbaijan Democrat Party was formed, with whom the Tudeh collaborated.

The greatest influence exerted by the Tudeh was really among workers and intellectuals (students and professors). The party was able to create the very powerful Central Council of Workers' Syndicates in Iran, which by 1945 numbered some 100,000 members, and which gained much ground for their demands through strikes and demonstrations. The appeal of the Tudeh to students is evident in the fact that in 1951, up to 75% of students studying at Tehran University had pro-communist leanings, while many lecturers, secondary and primary school teachers were sympathetic to the movement. The party also organised a special recruitment drive among religious students, with a large measure of success - some of the religious leaders - Baqā'ī for example - were even attracted - which, however, proved to be shortlived.¹ A limited number of government officials lent their support, as did a substantial core of young

1. Bindar, Political Developments in a Changing Society, op. cit., p.205.

army officers; but a mass response was elicited from women in Iranian society, since the Tudeh was the only party interested in promoting and fighting for their welfare and advancement, including their equal status with men.¹

The Tudeh was thus faced with three main obstacles: the resentment and antagonism of the ruling and middle-classes who traditionally benefited from exploitation of the peasantry and lower classes; strong opposition from the central government, as well as from the British, both of whom fiercely resisted any form of communism; and restriction caused by the weight of Islamic orthodoxy within Iran, which was naturally anti-communist. Despite these difficulties, however, the party built up a solid mass of support in a very short time, and quickly became a driving force and catalytic influence within Iranian society.

(6) CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF THE TUDEH PARTY

Several clearly defined areas can be identified as connected with the reasons for the failure of the Tudeh Party. One resides in the class structure of Iranian society. Another is the nature and expectations of that society and a third centres upon the Communist element within the Party and government-inspired reaction to it.

Leaving aside, to begin with, this last point, the manipulation of society played a significant part in the lack of success which the Tudeh Party achieved. A wide gap existed and continued between the Party organisation and its supporters because of the fear created in the atmosphere. Tudeh ideology, initiative and leadership came mainly from the Western-educated elitist middle-class. Its main appeal was on the other hand, to the working class, which it genuinely

1. Asnād wa-Dīdagāhā, pp.240-50.

considered to constitute the grass-roots of society. Although successful amongst the Trades Unions and workers, the Tudeh never completely bridged the class chasm because of central government claims that it was intolerant of alternative ideologies; the manifestation of this governmental resistance lay in the fact that the Party received little support from upper-class elements. This capitulation of socialist ideal to personal interest is a universal phenomenon.

Another popularly-propounded claim was that the Tudeh gave little recognition to minority groups. The central government manipulated the suspicion within rural communities of Marxist, Persian-speaking leaders with Shi'ite backgrounds who controlled the Party from the capital and, it was believed, neglected minority problems. In fact there was a steady adherence of various minority groups and this interest was strengthened and developed after 1945 in the context of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* movement, although much suspicion was fuelled by insular perspectives in certain areas.

Any success by the middle-class in revolution is worthless without rural support. The Tudeh Party, faced with the choice of peaceful parliamentary reform or violent extra-parliamentary revolution, chose the former (yet failed to prepare an alternative programme if the principal measure ended in failure). The Parliamentary solution, however, was never viable as long as the rural community was tied to the landed elite since this alliance prevented the radical middle-class from attaining a majority in the *Majlis*. It seems, then, that the Tudeh Party should have opted for violent action in that situation and to counter governmental propaganda. Popular dissatisfaction with Rīzā Shāh's regime was such that this course may well have worked.

The period of active Tudeh campaigning was much compressed because of suppression against the party: the effect

was that the party took every chance it could to get its message across to the masses; hence, for example, the coalition with Qavām, which was entered for this reason, though I agree it was a bad idea because it came to be suppressed.

The Tudeh could not create a united front in time and could not harmonize all the democratic forces against the governmental plotting. If, for example, Tudeh had more successfully created a united front with centralised leadership in the case of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan in 1945, it might thus have supported and protected the democratic government and survived central government suppression. In other words, the causes of failure amongst democratic movements must be sought in the disunity of the progressive forces of Iran.

These errors of judgement and approach were exploited by the central government to label the Tudeh Party as treacherous, and to create popular antipathy. Marxist-Leninist ideology smacked of atheism to the devout masses. In a country with a 75% illiteracy level, knowledge of communism was limited, or reduced to an ideology of godlessness, a popular assumption of which the central government made much capital. Secondly, due to widespread political ignorance, communism was indissolubly linked with the Soviet Union; all communist parties were, by definition, instruments of that country. It was an easy task for the landowning classes on both accounts to portray a Party so openly identified with communism as a threat to personal and national integrity.

A caveat must be added here, however. Despite the common association of the Tudeh and communism, it is not a straightforward or simple connection. The Party was a strange admixture of paradoxical contrasts. The backgrounds of a number of its leading figures indicate a religious influence that was not entirely suppressed. At the same time, the Party

exhibited both patriotic and nationalist tendencies - its upholding of the Constitution and Law, for instance. Thus although the Communist factor was obviously one of importance it should not be used as a criterion on a simplistic or reductionist level.

The strength of the existing government and military loyalty and power was matched by such strong religious faith that undisguised or diluted communism was unacceptable. Left on its own, the Tudeh was helpless, mainly due to a lack of armaments. The Party was ultimately defeated by internal reactionary forces and their Western backers, and its own tactical errors.

PART II

CHAPTER 4

THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN AZERBAIJAN

(1) The Establishment of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān

The establishment of the Dimūkrāt Party of Azerbaijan has been traditionally interpreted by both Western and Persian scholars as nothing but a Soviet creation. It is an approach characterised by the importance given to the role of the Soviet Union within the province of Azerbaijan: the presence of this Communist regime has been assumed to have been such a powerful factor that the establishment of a party with so marked an affinity with socialist ideas could not have come about except under its direction and aegis. This is an answer, however, which fits the facts too neatly, a trap of which we must beware, since it conveniently hides much more complicated motivations and tensions.

If we are, then, to accept this as one reason (although as we shall show later, not completely in the above form), we must also consider and investigate alternative explanations. These, it is suggested, are to be found in the particular history of Azerbaijan: its internal development, and its relationship with the rest of Iran and especially Tehran and the central government.

Northern Iran formed the centre of the national and democratic awakening of modern Iran: it was from (Iranian) Azerbaijan that this movement spread outwards to other parts of Iran. The formation of the Dimūkrāt Party should be seen as the result of an inner logic within the historical development of Azerbaijan. The root conditions for it reside in the strong sense of national and cultural pride held by the people of

Azerbaijan. Characteristic of such feelings were revolutionary and democratic fervour, combined with a passionate espousal of social and political justice; and prior to the accession of Rīzā Shāh, Azerbaijan had traditionally received special attention and respect. Just these elements, however, were seen by Rīzā Shāh to represent a real threat to the exercise of his dictatorship, and he embarked upon a programme of discrimination against Azerbaijan,¹ which took the form of the elimination of a specific Azerbaijani character and culture and the concomitant movement for democracy. Further tension was aroused by the activities of the central government towards Azerbaijan following the abdication of Rīzā Shāh, which deepened the Azerbaijanis' grievances and sense of national humiliation while at the same time sharpening their frustration, resentment and anger against reactionary rule.

It was therefore quite natural that many Azerbaijanis threw their support behind Pīshavarī, whose commitment was as deep and passionate as their own, and natural once again that when the attempt to achieve a redress of their grievances through parliament failed with the rejection of Pīshavarī by the 14th Majlis, that they turned to other means, which found their fulfilment in the creation of the Democrat Party of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has traditionally occupied a special position and received special attention from the rulers of Iran, who recognised its economic and strategic potential. Its abundant grain crops have given rise to Azerbaijan's reputation as the 'bread-basket' of Iran,² used many times over to avert severe food shortages throughout the whole of Iran. Export of fruit and leather from Azerbaijan is a valuable source of foreign

1. Nigārishī bar Sitam -i Millī dar Dawra-yi Siyāh-i Silsila-yi Pahlavī, Tabriz, 1978, *passim*; *Dunyā* 12, Winter 1975.

2. R. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, University of Pittsburgh, 1964, p.118.

capital for the economy, too. Strategically, lying in the north west corner of Iran, next to the Russian frontier, it forms the apex of the Iranian defence triangle against both Turkey and Russia, ancient enemies of Iran. As a province it has long been associated in the minds of Iranians, with good historical support, with the seat of protest movements against the central government; its prestige rose with its pioneering role in the 1905 Constitutional Revolution. Remarks made by Dr. Musaddiq in the 14th Majlis indicate the regard in which Azerbaijan was also held by the central government: Azerbaijan, he said, was the heart of Iran; Azerbaijanis were patriotic, brave, and determined.

Nevertheless Azerbaijan had clearly defined local characteristics, and to some extent can be said to possess a national character.¹ In contradistinction to the majority of Iranians who are Persian-speaking, the Azerbaijanis use a language closely related to ^{the} Turkish ^{of Turkey}. Their sense of national pride, which expresses itself in a demand for cultural autonomy, can be clearly seen in events such as the Tobacco protest of 1891,² their participation in, and leadership of, the Constitutional Revolution of 1905,³ the revolt of Khiyābānī occasioned by the 1919 Treaty made by the Prime Minister with the British,⁴ and Lāhūtī's revolt in Azerbaijan against Rīzā Shāh's policy over the gendarmerie.⁵

Azerbaijan, before the accession of Rīzā Shāh, was thus considered in many respects the cream of Iran (it was even the place chosen for the raising of the royal family). At the same

1. For a clearer understanding, see: R. Hashūtiyan, Maslala-yi Millat (Problems of Nationality), Tehran 1945, passim.

2. For more details, see Avery, Modern Iran, New York, 1965, p.95ff.

3. E.G. Browne, Persian Revolution of 1905-09, C.U.P., 1910, passim.

4. See Ch.I.

5. See Ch.I.

time, it was the centre of what the Iranian rulers saw as 'revolutionary' ideas. Since the introduction of the Constitutional Law in 1905, the Azerbaijanis who had fought hardest for it, strove to ensure that it was upheld, vehemently opposed any attempt to undermine it. The governor of Azerbaijan appointed by Rīzā Shāh stated that: "Azerbaijanis are Turks. They ate hay and gained the Constitutional Law. Now they eat straw and will reform Iran", a sentiment which reveals how government officials feared the power of Azerbaijan.¹ Rīzā Shāh perceived in Azerbaijan a real threat to his rule, and proceeded upon a policy designed to weaken and dissipate its traditional influential position. The province rapidly deteriorated in standing, suffering concurrently a deliberate neglect of basic economic and political rights - such as the maintenance of roads, aid for reconstruction, etc.²

The high tax rate levied upon Azerbaijan, admittedly in proportion to its wealth, did not, however, result in due returns under Rīzā Shāh. Its wealth accrued from grain was steadily eroded and spirited away, as in the instance of 1940, when Mustawfī purchased the whole crop at a below-market price and sold it to Tehran; the Azerbaijanis were compelled to buy low-grade grain from Gurgān which proved to be poisonous, and when a complaint was brought by the Mayor of Tabriz, Anṣārī, to Mustawfī, the latter merely removed him from his post and made no attempt to remedy the situation.³ Mustawfī, even as governor, did not refrain from denigrating the Azerbaijanis - an extant letter written by him contains the sentence that the Director of the National Census (to whom the letter was addressed) was to be envied: he counted people, whereas Mustawfī was reduced to counting donkeys.⁴

1. Āzarbāyjan 6, 28th Abān, 1320 (19th November, 1941).

2. Faryād 4, 21st Āzar, 1321 (12th December, 1942).

3. Dād 24, 18th Abān, 1321 (9th November, 1942).

4. Sitāra 1211, 3rd Āzar, 1320 (24th November, 1941); for more details of Mustawfī's slander, see Sitāra 1203, 1223; these are corroborated by reports given to me in personal interviews.

Part of Rīzā Shāh's restrictive policy was a programme to eliminate the use of Turkish. Muḥsinī, Director of Education in Azerbaijan, announced a penalty of yoking, and forced drinking from animal troughs for anyone heard speaking Turkish;¹ Zawqī, his successor, ordered the payment of a fine for the same offence. These discriminatory measures had most effect upon the younger students who were thus forbidden to use their mother language; some did not begin to understand Persian until a late age, and the education of a number of them was seriously retarded. The policy of Rīzā Shāh was therefore to a large extent counter-productive, for it motivated future generations towards reaction against the central government, in defence against slander and abuse of their national pride and their respect for the Constitutional Law.

The declaration made by Azerbaijanis to Tehran following Rīzā Shāh's abdication is a clear indication that the province was not simply dedicated to revolution against the central government, for in it they announced that they would forget past injustices, and pledge support to the new regime if they received assurances of its commitment to uphold the Constitutional Law, and the continued wishes and rights of the Azerbaijani people.²

There was, however, continued tension between Azerbaijan and the central government. The Azerbaijan Society was created immediately after Rīzā Shāh's abdication, with the aim of reversing the trend of discrimination, especially with regard to the use of Turkish. The central government forbade the sale of its newspaper, Āzarbāyjān, first published in Persian and Turkish in October 1941, outside the province, and the Society itself was broken up after six months by Fātimī, governor of Azerbaijan at that time,³ who stopped all publication of the

1. Kayhan, No.863, 26th Bahman, 1324 (15th February, 1946).

2. Sitāra 1198, 20th Abān, 1320 (11th November, 1941).

3. Āzarbāyjān 26, 13th Day, 1320 (3rd December, 1941).

paper.

Following the collapse of the Society, the provincial committee of the Tudeh Party was established in Azerbaijan in April 1942,¹ and attracted the political progressives, workers and peasants who had been disappointed by the failure of the Society.

The organisation and political tactical skills which the Tudeh brought engendered more opposition from the central government; members were subject to arrest, torture and death. At the same time, Sayyid Žiyā took positive action against the Tudeh by spreading propaganda that the Party's aim was to undermine Islam, and its members were thus infidels whose death needed no justification.² Harassment such as the storming of the Trades Union Congress building in 1944, which resulted in 7 dead and many others injured was quite common, and there was no evidence of police intervention.³ Sayyid Žiyā was encouraged by the Prime Minister, Šadr, declaring a reward for anyone killing or arresting Tudeh Party members,⁴ and the army units stationed in Tabriz were used as back-up forces. Despite this persecution both from Tehran and locally, the Tudeh's popularity^{ity} increased, as the Azerbaijanis disapproved of the central government's activity, and sought an alternative. The support is reflected in the unprecedented response at the mass meetings of November 1944, in 10 Azerbaijan cities, where the party slogans called for a return to democracy, and renewed adherence to the Constitutional Law gained by the forefathers' blood.⁵

1. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran", MEJ, January 1949, vol.3, p.48.

2. Rahbar 1511, 22nd Isfand, 1323 (13th March, 1945).

3. Rahbar 718, 25th Urdībihisht, 1325 (15th May, 1946).

4. Āzhār yr.2, 178, 24th Murdād, 1323 (15th August, 1944).

5. Rahbar 438, 20th Āzar, 1323 (11th December, 1944).

The central government also engaged in economic discrimination against Azerbaijan. The rationing system was weighted against the province: commodities such as sugar were received in very small quantities, and usually late, causing much hardship. Šadr ignored the multiple telegrams sent warning of serious consequences, and a column in Pīshavarī's newspaper, Āzhīr, devoted itself to letters and telegrams expressing the grievances of people oppressed by the brutality of gendarmes, short rations and a high crime rate.

The return of Pīshavarī himself to Azerbaijan presaged the final steps taken in the protest of Azerbaijan against unfair economic and political treatment of the province by the central government, and the establishment of the Democrat Party as a serious alternative. The rejection of Pīshavarī's credentials by the 14th Majlis forced him to seek non-parliamentary measures. The elections in Azerbaijan had been delayed on various pretexts by Tehran, but obviously in an attempt to gain time for official candidates to canvass and gain election (by improper methods) instead of those put forward locally; the government feared a progressive majority that would oust Sayyid Žiyā from the Majlis; (Sayyid Žiyā openly admitted in the Majlis his patronage by the British¹). Parliament opened without the Azerbaijan representatives and provoked an angry reaction in Azerbaijan expressed in large demonstrations and a flood of telegrams and letters of protest which urged the Majlis to disown their acceptance of Sayyid Žiyā's nomination, for his influence would be a threat to Iran's nascent democracy, and would be a disruptive element, causing internal political conflict.² This was later proved to have been a correct assessment by the testimony of A. Mazlūmī,

1. Āzhīr 133, 26th Farvardīn, 1323 (15th April, 1944). British Minister to the Foreign Office, 20th January, 1944, FO. 371/Persia 1944/34-40186.

2. For more details of Sayyid Žiyā's activities, see Āzhīr, year 1, 119, 12th Isfand, 1322 (21 February, 1944), 120, 14th Isfand, 1322 (23rd February, 1944), 123, 11th Isfand, 1322 (1st March, 1944), 124, 14th Isfand, 1322 (4th March, 1944), 125, 16th Isfand, 1322 (6th March, 1944), 126, 18th Isfand, 1322 (8th March, 1944), 127, 21st Isfand, 1322 (11th March, 1944).

who told Āzhīr¹ that he had been recruited by Sayyid Ziyā to spread dissension among the workers, unions and Tudeh members in Azerbaijan. Upon arrival, however, he had been convinced that he should not carry out the task. According to Mazlūmī, others had also been sent to different provinces for the same purpose.

Despite government interference, the Freedom Front gained the majority when the elections were finally held in March 1944. It is a popular myth that Russia swayed the result of these elections, and their lack of interference was recognised even by the British Foreign Office.² Pīshavarī was thus elected, winning 15,780 votes, a considerable number at that time in Azerbaijan. Judging from his programme, Pīshavarī took a strongly progressive stand. It was this that caused parliament's prevarication in the confirmation of his seat. There was an angry reaction from Azerbaijan, floods of telegrams reaching Tehran with the accusation that although the elections had been properly conducted and legitimate candidates elected, these men were being refused appointment by parliament - in contrast to its non-interference in other regions where elections had in fact been rigged.

As a result of the prolonged and widespread pressure, the Majlis eventually accepted the secondary Azerbaijani candidates, but refused the credentials of both Pīshavarī and Khuy'ī, the first two representatives. Azerbaijanis saw in this move a deliberate discrimination against Azerbaijan. Dr. Muṣaddiq,³ an M.P. for Tehran, was also disturbed by Khuy'ī's rejection. He criticised it as a violation of the Constitutional Law. Pīshavarī was refused six weeks later in

1. Āzhīr 2, 150, 9th Khurdād, 1323 (30th May, 1944).

2. F.O. 371/Persia/943/34-35117.

3. Ustavān, K., Siyāsāt-i Muvāzana-yi Manfī dar Majlis-i Chahārdahūm, Teheran 1949, 2 vols, passim.

an open abuse of justice and democratic, constitutional principles. The close vote - 50 against, 47 for, with 3 abstentions - was itself not binding since the 100 members present were a deficient number; Iqdām (Action)¹ claimed that greater representation might have swung the vote in Pīshavarī's favour. The whole procedure thus took place in violation of Constitutional Law which required a 51% majority (in Pīshavarī's case it was 50% and was less for Khuy'ī). Pīshavarī was subsequently refused the right to make a speech of appeal² because parliament feared that he might convince those members who had been persuaded to disallow his election, that they had been deceived; one of these said that he regretted having cast a negative vote, and was still ignorant of why Pīshavarī's credentials had been considered invalid. Similarly, his speech might reveal to the public the unconstitutional nature of the elections and parliament's role in the whole procedure.

Many of Iran's progressive papers did indeed come out in condemnation of Pīshavarī's rejection, warning the Majlis that it would lead to disastrous consequences for the country.³ Parliament ignored these and similar telegrams from other parts of Iran (such as Rasht and Khurāsān);⁴ Ṣadr declared that he could not answer one or a hundred telegrams. If the protests from Azerbaijan are read carefully, they make it clear that they had in mind a well-defined programme for Azerbaijan, and did not simply make vague and insubstantial threats. If Pīshavarī was rejected by the Majlis, the Azerbaijani people would return him again in Azerbaijan through alternative

1. Iqdām 526, Tehran.

2. Āzhīr 2, 171, 1st Mordād, 1323 (23rd July, 1944).

3. Dād 29, 24th Āzar, 1321 (15th November, 1942), Khāvar 5, quoted in Āzhīr 170, 27th Tīr, 1323 (18th July, 1944), Rahbar 336,

4. Āzhīr 2, 174, 12th Mordād, 1323 (3rd August, 1944).

political means.¹ Pīshavarī alluded to these intentions in his final speech before parliament. Since he had been refused acceptance to the Majlis, he would enter politics in some other way.² He further clarified this position in a later article in Āzhir,³ where he said that he knew the meaning of the 15,780 votes he had received (i.e. the Azerbaijanis' determination for political redress of their cause), and that he was committing himself in response to the trust that they had placed in him, to defend their rights by whatever means were at his disposal.

In addition to the indigenous push which culminated in the creation of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān, there are several secondary factors involved. The national character of the Azerbaijanis was responsible for their political awareness, which was much greater than that of other provinces, and restlessness against the landowners. The generally fragile political situation in Iran encouraged the ruling class' neglect of the minorities within the country. Exploitation more than improvement for them was uppermost in Tehran's mind as it grew richer and the provinces poorer, and the administration enjoyed various personal advantages and privileges.

British policy was to insist on the retention of concessions in Iran gained through the rule of Riżā Shāh and which, like any concessions, was opposed by Azerbaijanis. To carry the policy out, Britain supported the reactionary opposition which was suppressing the democratic movement; Sayyid Żiyā was allowed to return from Palestine by the British to assist the opposition against, for example, the Tudeh Party.

The Russian attitude on the other hand, gave Azerbaijan

1. Āzhīr 2, 167, 20th Tīr, 1323 (11th July, 1944); 168, 22nd Tīr, 1323 (13th July, 1944).

2. K. Javādiyān, personal interview.

3. Āzhīr, 170, 27th Tīr, 1323 (18th July, 1944).

a political opportunity. Azerbaijan was a zone of Russian influence, and this enabled the people's political power to mature, influenced by Soviet socialism. The Soviet influence was also a deterrent to interference from the central government in Azerbaijani affairs.

(2) Pīshavarī in Tabriz

The closure of the parliamentary option led Pīshavarī to consider alternative methods for achieving authentic recognition of the proper status of Azerbaijan.¹ While still in Tehran, he conducted a joint correspondence with both Shabistārī, leader of the Azerbaijan Society, and Bakharov,² President of Soviet Azerbaijan, on the matter of obtaining Soviet moral and financial support for the setting up of a new party in the province. With this assurance in hand, he returned to Tabriz, leaving Āzhīr to be edited by friends.³ Further consultation between Pīshavarī and Shabistārī resulted in the decision to establish the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*. After 3 days of talks with Pādagān, who was leader of the Azerbaijan branch of the Tudeh, all 3 then agreed that the Tudeh should be incorporated into the new Party once it had been founded: Pādagān was to announce its formal membership at the Tudeh conference. This confluence is accounted for by several factors: Prior to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, there existed only 2 progressive parties within Azerbaijan - the Tudeh, and the Freedom Front.⁴ The latter was set up by Pīshavarī and Shabistārī, and thus it was natural that they should unite. In the same way, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* desired the support, rather than the rivalry, of the Tudeh whose aims were almost identical with its own.

1. Javādiyān, personal interview August 1982.

2. Kuniholm, B., The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East, P.U.P. 1980, pp.274-5.

3. Oniki-yi Shahrivar, Tabriz 1946, p.1.

4. Ibid., p.1.

The Tudeh for its part, was willing to join its support in order to improve its widespread and broad following, to broaden further its appeal to the working-class, to increase toleration of different ideologies and to consolidate its non-revolutionary principles.¹ The trades union movement, too, came under the aegis of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, as a result of its link with the Tudeh. With the amalgamation of these 3 movements into the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, a single, united, and broad based revolutionary front for progressive action was created in Azerbaijan. The policy adopted by Pīshavarī was that of minimising class differences and maximising the joint conflict against Tehran: "Our aim is to unite all Azerbaijani people. The class struggle will not appear until we have secured our national rights"; he appealed to industrialists and workers to "put aside class differences and unite for the national good of Azerbaijan".²

Physical recruitment to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* proved a more difficult task. The failure and political insincerity of previous progressive parties had created an air of mistrust among the population, which made canvassing a singularly unfruitful activity, when it was coupled with the effects of oppression and threatening propaganda from the central government. Instead, Pīshavarī published on September 3, 1945³ (first issue of the newly established organ of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt - Āzarbāyjān*), a twelve-point declaration of purpose, which was intended to be distributed among the people for the signature of those who agreed with it.

It was widely read to those who could not read, however, yet despite a number of signatures, many were still withdrawn later out of fear, a fact that was not overly disappointing to

1. Kishavarz, in *Aras* 2, 11 Day, 1326 (1st January, 1947).

2. *Āzarbāyjān*, No.1, 14th Sharīvar, 1324 (5th September, 1945), No.5, 26th Shahrīvar, 1325 17th September, 1945).

3. *Dunya* 4, 1979, pp.70-74. Farquhar to Bevin, April 1946 [E 3499/3/34] PRO, p.1.

Party's leaders. Its publication - eventually with 48 signatures - had an impressive reception; telegrams sent from all over Azerbaijan and printed in the official organ of the Party, Āzarbāyjān,¹ were full of congratulations and signed in increasing numbers. The first issue contained telegrams from Ahar, Marand and Julfā, with 87 signatures each;² in the second, the signatures exceeded 250 per telegram;³ 750 in the third,⁴ and on into the thousands.

The introduction to the declaration put Azerbaijan's struggle for national provincial representation into the context of international democracy - rights which were exercised by most progressive countries, and which were guaranteed in theory but not in practice, to Iranians as well, by the Constitutional Law. Azerbaijan was committed to adherence to this Law, and thereby to a central government which respected it, and therefore given the world situation, with democracy victorious, it would no longer tolerate oppression by the central government. In the new need for a progressive party to rule with reference to the wishes of Azerbaijanis, the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt would serve the need for a focal point, around which progressives from all strata of society could gather.

The subsequent twelve points amplified this position:

Point 1: While the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt respected the integrity

1. Shabistari had edited a newspaper of that name for the Azerbaijan Society; the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt subsequently adopted the same title for its own organ, and Shabistari remained as its editor although Pīshavarī retained overall editorial authority. The paper had a significant propaganda function within the Party, written as it was in Turkish, the mother tongue of Azerbaijan, (as well as Persian).

2. Āzarbāyjān 1, 14th Shahrīvar, 1324 (5th September, 1945).

3. Ibid. 2, 17th Shahrīvar, 1324 (8th September, 1945).

4. Ibid. 3, 20th Shahrīvar, 1324 (11th September, 1945).

and independence of Iran, it also sought autonomy for Azerbaijan in order that it might improve its culture and carry out construction programmes.¹

Point 2: In order to achieve this quickly, a provincial body should be elected to begin work immediately. It would be active in cultural, economic and medical spheres, and would be vigilant in replacing without delay those government officials found to be unsuited to their job.²

Point 3: Turkish was to be taught to third year levels in all primary schools, and thereafter both Turkish and Persian. A national university of Azerbaijan was to be established.³

Point 4: The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* Party would try to improve industry and to increase the number of factories in Azerbaijan. It would also aim to reduce unemployment as quickly as possible, partly through encouraging cottage industry as well as heavy industry.

Point 5: The Party wanted an increase in trade: since the closure of trade routes had caused hardship to peasants, they would look for other outlets and extend opportunities for selling Azerbaijani products.

Point 6: They called on all citizens of Azerbaijan to unite towards the modernisation of their cities - one of the immediate aims was to purify the water of Tabriz.

Point 7: The *Firqa* recognised that the wealth and well-

1. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.1.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

being of the country depended on the peasants, and therefore urged them to be receptive to improvements and reform. To improve relations between peasants and landlords the Party proposed to lift the heavy taxes levied on the peasants. They also desired the redistribution of lands vacated in a hurry by the wealthy and that belonging to the state amongst the landless peasants, and the availability of modern equipment to be made to them.

Point 8: Immediate alleviation of unemployment would be effected by building factories, increasing trade, and constructing a railway network and new roads.

Point 9: They expressed belief in free and true elections, with no interference by government officials etc. Elections should take place on the same day throughout Iran, and should be conducted on the basis of proportional representation.¹

Point 10: The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* promised to fight against corruption amongst civil servants; they would at the same time work for a raise in salary for such employees to avoid the need to take bribes, and would commend work done well.

Point 11: Half of the tax raised by the central government would be spent by the *Firqa* on internal improvements within Azerbaijan, and they would try to reduce the amount of indirect tax demanded.

Point 12: The Party wished friendly relations with all democratic countries, especially the Allied Powers;

1. Partin, M.W., United States - Iranian Relations, 1945-1947, North Texas State University Ph.D., 1977, pp.69-70.

to achieve this, they would fight any nation opposed to such relations.

The conclusion of the declaration announced that the Firqa primary responsibility was to the support of Azerbaijan. The reforms of Azerbaijan would be of benefit to the whole of Iran, so that only after these had been carried through, would they turn their attention to those parts outside Azerbaijan.

The publication of the declaration provoked an immediate response from the central government, which initiated a campaign alleging that Azerbaijan was demanding secession from Iran in order to set up an independent state. To counteract any possible negative effects of this propaganda, Pīshavarī called a meeting of Azerbaijanis from all strata of society, designed to clarify the position taken by the Firqa: drawing a map of Azerbaijan within the totality of Iran in the air, he made it clear that the Party's demand was for political autonomy within Iran.¹

With any suspicions or doubts thus allayed, the organisation and activity of the Firqa began in earnest. Local branches were set up under the direction of provincial organisers in various towns and cities, and efficient prior planning ensured quick success for the party. A general meeting was convened on September 13, when a centralising body in the form of a provisional committee of 11 was elected. Pīshavarī was appointed its president, with Shabistarī as his deputy. The C.C.U.T.U. announced its decision to unite, and the Tudeh's membership was promised by Pādagān and Qiyāmī; the strength gained from the Tudeh support was recognised by

1. Reza Shahshahani, "The Background of the Iranian Affairs", Science and Society, London, 1946, vol.10, p.130.

the appointment of Tudeh members to the central committee.¹

A further, preparatory conference was held on September 20, before the first Congress, planned for October 1st. 59 delegates were elected to represent the different strata within Azerbaijan society; (1500 people attended the meeting). The conference was also taken as an opportunity to express the Firqa's policy in a formal petition² addressed to the respective Foreign Offices of the Allied Powers. The concern felt by Azerbaijan over the suppression of democracy in Iran was laid out, and, with an appeal to the 2nd principle of the Atlantic Charter,³ a request was made for freedom to establish democracy in Iran, and to achieve the political autonomy in Azerbaijan⁴ that would accord with the people's wishes concerning their own destiny.

During the 3-day Congress, several important steps were implemented. The amalgamation of the Tudeh and the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt was officially confirmed (Āzarbāyjān stated that 60,000 Tudeh members joined the new party⁵); and the manifesto was approved⁶ and the central committee elected, with Pīshavarī as head, and Shabistarī and Pādagān as deputies. The policy adopted closely resembled the declaration of September 3, with additions such as the right to freedoms of speech, press and association.⁷ Until November 1st, local

1. Abrahāmian, "Communism and Communalism in Iran: The Tudeh and the Firqah-i Dimokrat", IJMES 1 (1970), p.309.

2. Rahbar, 640, 6th Azār, 1324 (27th November, 1945).

3. Kuniholm, Origins of Cold War, op. cit., p.103 (Charter of March 1941).

4. Ibid., p.280n.

5. Āzarbāyjān 5, 26th Shahrīvar, 1324 (17th September, 1945).

6. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.1.

7. Tulsiram, The History of the Communist Movement in Iran, Bhopal (n.d.), p.103.

conferences were to be held throughout Azerbaijan to elect their committees; the franchise to vote was to be open to all, of either sex, between the ages of 20-80. In the meantime, thousands of supporters from all over Iran arrived to congratulate the Party's founders, and gathered outside in a clear indication of the enthusiasm generated towards the new movement, (in parallel to the widespread and broad-based character of the delegates at the Congress itself).

The Congress of October 1 represented a very significant movement in the history of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* Party. Its official recognition of the new movement gave to the Party an authoritative status in the minds of many Azerbaijanis, who saw it as the real embodiment of their hopes for national and political autonomy.¹ It acted, therefore, as a crystallisation of the organisation, and as a catalyst which attracted strong support for democratic demands. Its popularity became so evident that the *Firqa* drew much publicity from countries outside Iran, both negative and positive. As a result of these combined factors, the central government felt the *Firqa* to be a dynamic threat, and reacted vehemently in a series of repressive measures.

(3) The Road to Independence

The transformation of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* into the National Government of Azerbaijan was due primarily to force of circumstances, rather than being a natural consequence of policies adopted by the party. Its constitution did not include a necessary progression from party status to its establishment in the role of governing body in Azerbaijan, although one of its basic demands was for autonomy in Azerbaijan. The development was in fact a result of external pressures which acted upon the *Firqa* and its particular situation so as to

1. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.1.

make the step from party to government almost inevitable.

Two factors were of extreme importance. We have already explained the nature of the peculiar tie of need and solution which existed between the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** and the people of Azerbaijan. With the increasing popularity and success of the Party, two contenders for influence and political power were created - the other, the official structure organised by the central government.¹ It was not possible for the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** to retain its status as a minority group in the face of a rival movement whose actions were authorised and official. In order to develop, it was therefore forced to act on a similar level. This meant that it was in effect leveraging for political power on a national basis.

The second element was the strong governmental pressure against the Party which increased **Firqa** resistance to any control of Azerbaijan from or by Tehran. In consequence, Sā^cid was Prime Minister from March 1944 and was considerably biased towards Britain, as shown by his unofficial 'title', 'British Stooge', used by pro-Russian Liberals, the Tudeh and the Freedom Front. During his premiership, Sā^cid had to confront a number of problems, most seriously the "workers' revolt"² in Isfahan³ which threatened to become general if the Tudeh was not quickly suppressed,⁴ and which was followed by the Oil Concession crisis in the North involving the Soviet Union. Following this and the revolt of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, the Premier had to resign. Two schools of thought dispute the true motive for the withdrawal of Parliamentary confidence. One

1. Āzarbāyjan 8, 29th Shahrīvar, 1324 (20th September, 1945).

2. N. Fatemi, Oil Diplomacy: Powderkeg of Iran, New York, 1954, p.216.

3. See the British Consul's 'Bi-weekly Reports', FO 371/Eastern 1944/Persia 34-40163.

4. Ra'd-i Imruz, 15-25 May, 1944.

suggests¹ merely that Ḥakīmī, the replacement premier, would be less biased between the two powers, Britain and Russia; the more cynical view² is that the deputies' fear of a Northern separatist revolt forced them to agree to Russian conditions for a conclusion of the crisis. Ḥakīmī assumed office from Sā'id on 24th October, 1945, and immediately proved himself to have as little neutrality³ as his conservative pro-Western and anti-democratic predecessor, as exemplified by Ḥakīmī's actions on November 14th,⁴ when several days of severe anti-Tudeh repression followed.

Ḥakīmī thus led the reactionary core within the central government that was supported by the reactionaries who had fled from Azerbaijan. This group was so insensitive to the mood prevalent in Azerbaijan that the government was regarded as completely intransigent and unwilling to compromise or negotiate.⁵ In this way the Firqa and the central government represented a total bifurcation and polarisation of forces. This situation is exemplified in the reaction to the activity of the Mayor of Tabriz.⁶ His refusal to recognise the newly elected council was taken up by the Firqa with the central government as a breach of Constitutional Law. Tehran ignored all the Firqa's complaints, impelling the Party towards the decision that they would be forced to take the matter into their own hands. They thus ordered the newly elected Council to take up

1. Rūznāma-yi Rasmi, year 1, no.181, p.563.

2. Abrahimian, "Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)", Middle Eastern Studies, p.42.

3. Tabari, K., Iran's Policies Towards the United States during the Anglo-Russian Occupation, 1941-46, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, p.201.

4. Arfa, Gen. Hassan, Under Five Shahs, London, Murray, 1964, p.346.

5. One of the oppressive measures taken by Tehran was its refusal to give Azerbaijan any money to pay wages or salaries.

6. Āzarbāyjān 9, 30th Shahrivar, 1324 (21st September, 1945).

its duties.¹ Similarly, their response to the tolerance by the government of gendarme brutality in the rural areas was the formation of *Fidā'ī* groups.

Soon after the formation of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and its obvious support amongst the peasants and workers of rural areas, the Central Government became alarmed and in order to support the landed classes, sent the gendarmerie to wage a campaign of oppression against rural *Firqa* support. In the long term,² however, this worked to the advantage of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*; many fleeing from the terror ran into the arms of the Party and began to support it for the counter-measures which it took to defend them against the gendarmes' brutality.³ In addition, judicial procedure was drawn into the campaign. Local courts were advised to treat acts performed by the gendarmerie (which included violation of private property and even sexual harassment) as outside their jurisdiction and to turn away complaints made by peasants. Many of the latter took flight into the mountains and deserts; some reached other cities and spread the details of government oppression.

The initial response of the *Firqa* itself was passive. It published its grievances abroad through foreign consulates and embassies in Iran, but the reaction was negligible. Turning to the internal reaction, a long list of 78 complaints was sent from the *Firqa* to *Muṣaddiq* containing grievances against the persecutory regime of the gendarmerie against innocent victims in the rural areas. But there was no positive response from the Central Government; indeed coverage was prevented in Iran by banning sales of the paper *Āzarbāyjān* outwith the

1. *Āzarbāyjān* 9, 30th Shahrīvar, 1324 (21st September, 1945).

2. *Mardum*, Special Number 38, 21st Bāhman, 1324 (10th February, 1946).

3. *Āzarbāyjān* 8, 29th Shahrīvar, 1324 (20th September, 1945).

4. *Tabarī*, *op. cit.*, p.202.

province and by restricted mail services. The government's attitude indeed produced immediate repercussions as the movement realised that peaceful solutions had been exhausted. On November 15th crowds led by the *Firqa* seized the gendarmerie posts in several important cities. The seizure on 18th November by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāts* of Miyāna cut off the province from the capital; the central government, however, insisted that General Darakshānī, who had Tudeh sympathies, remain but prepare to evacuate, rather than to capitulate immediately.

Furthermore the *Firqa* published a statement declaring self-defence of this sort in the villages to be legal. Groups of young workers formed *Fidā'ī* bands, armed by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and had much success in counteracting the gendarmerie's activity in the villages.

This dialectic between oppression and jostling for power was extended by a third element. There existed in the province a great eagerness for the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* to take the reins of power more firmly into their hands. They thus urged the Party towards forming a national government as the logical outcome, as they saw it, of the *Firqa's* own aims and promises.

Thus the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* entered its second stage of development, wherein all its members, and particularly the leaders, began to take comprehensive steps towards establishing the Party as the National government in Azerbaijan.

The first task was seen as educating Azerbaijanis as to the importance of local and parliamentary elections, and was undertaken by means of the Party newspaper and through conferences. The most significant was a committee meeting held

1. Arfa , op. cit., pp.346-347; Fatemi, op. cit., p.269.

on November 8th. It was resolved to start upon positive action to facilitate and work towards the establishment of a national government. To this end, the decision was taken to establish the national government of Azerbaijan, without official permission from the government in Tehran, on December 12, 1945.¹ Provincial and local elections were ordered, and a statement was issued with the following points:²

- a) Provincial and parliamentary elections were to be held regularly, and any attempts to delay them would be opposed.
- b) The formative period of the *Firqa* was over. It was now able to fulfil the wishes of Azerbaijani people and set up a national government.
- c) A pledge was taken that following the provincial elections, a conference would be organised at which the newly elected representatives would meet.
- d) Members of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were promised 'cards', signed and stamped by the central committee, to give them official recognition.
- e) A body for organising young Azerbaijanis would be created whereby several people would be elected to instruct young people as to their duties.
- f) The formulation of a solution for ending gendarme brutality in the villages, including the mobilisation of all Azerbaijanis against the gendarmes.

The provincial elections were announced immediately after

1. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.2.

2. Oniki-yi Shahrīvar, op. cit., pp.16-18.

this committee meeting had taken place. They were followed by the staging of the First National Congress in Tabriz on November 20th.¹ The chair was occupied by the brother of Sattār Khān, the nationally-acclaimed champion of constitutional law from Azerbaijan, and 800 delegates² were present to hear the introductory speeches on contemporary events. Analysis of these statements demonstrates that the speakers had no separatist intentions, each concluding his address with the words "Long live Iranian independence, integrity and freedom" and "Long live Azerbaijani autonomy" (note, no reference to independence).

Khalīl Āzād³ stated that "Our aim is that the Constitutional Law be properly obeyed, and we appeal to the reactionaries in Tehran to put an end to the cruel oppression and slander perpetrated against the Azerbaijani people".⁴

Khurramdīn⁵ said that to ask for a Provincial Council was not to seek separation from Tehran. Their aim was still to send representatives to the National Parliament in Tehran, not to break off relations with Tehran. The wish to establish a National Parliament of Azerbaijan came from the view that it would do the work presently performed by the Provincial Council.

Khurdishī⁶ said "My speech is addressed to the enemies of the Azerbaijani people, those who slander us with accusations of separation. We never want to separate from Iran. Azerbaijan belongs to Iran and Iran to Azerbaijan".

1. New York Times, 27th November, 1945.

2. Dunyā 8, 1978, p.47.

3. Nat. Congress Proceedings, 3rd Session, November 20, 1945.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

Sayyidi¹ commented, "We can rule ourselves better than others can rule us. All the slanders of the opposition have but one motive - the suppression of the Democratic Movement. I believe Azerbaijan should first reform itself, then the rest of Iran, because Azerbaijan is at the very heart of this country".

Pīshavari² himself said that the Iranian authorities preferred to solve the Azerbaijan problem in London, Washington, or Moscow, rather than solving them in the Azerbaijan, at Tabriz, as part of the Iranian problem. The question had to be resolved in Iran. Because Azerbaijan was a friend of the Allies, they should not interfere in either Iranian or Azerbaijani affairs, and he concluded,³ "Now, we are able to govern Azerbaijan ourselves. We do not want to separate from the rest of Iran; we ask only for autonomy, Azerbaijan is not India. The Azerbaijani nation is a vibrant one and it has a shining history. It gave birth to people such as Sattār Khān, Bāqir Khān and Shaykh Muḥammad Khiyābānī. We want national autonomy; we want out trade, our health-care, our education, our communication systems, everything, to be in the hands of Azerbaijani citizens. Freedom is not something which will be handed to us as a plate. It will have to be fought for. If the central government chooses to suppress this movement by force, we will retaliate with force".

The Congress elected a National Committee of 39 members. Its main function consisted in taking on the role of intermediary with the central government in the negotiations for autonomy and the right to establish a national government in Azerbaijan. These were to be conducted through peaceful means; it did not possess authority to say anything against the independence and integrity of Iran.

1. Nat. Congress Proceedings, op. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The Congress also issued a declaration¹ and sent copies to the central government officials and the foreign consuls in Azerbaijan. Careful reading of this document reveals the Congress' policy towards the rest of Iran, and particularly towards Azerbaijan.

The text of the declaration read as follows:

- 1) Azerbaijan has a right to autonomy because of her particular experience, her history, and cultural and linguistic differences, and a right to enjoy democratic government in accordance with the Atlantic Charter. The wish to establish a large amount of self-government for Azerbaijan does not mean, however, the acceptance of a threat against Iran's integrity or independence.
- 2) The National Congress, by claiming autonomy, does not intend the redrawing of Iran's borders, nor to be part of a separatist movement.
- 3) Azerbaijan supports the democracy which was granted by the Constitutional Law in 1905-6. In keeping with other provinces, Azerbaijan would send representatives to the national parliament and pay a fair tax to the central government.
- 4) Congress expresses clearly and officially its respect for the integrity and independence of Iran. At the same time, however, it will set up an Azerbaijan national government to control Azerbaijan's own affairs. It will thus introduce democratic government sanctioned by Constitutional Law.
- 5) According to the Manifesto of the National Congress,

1. New York Times, op. cit.

Azerbaijanis would vote for a national parliament. The national government would be composed of people from this parliament, people responsible towards **Azerbaijanis**.

- 6) **Azerbaijanis** have a special affection for the Turkish language. By forcing people to speak an alien language (Persian), they are prevented from improving their education, literacy, etc. The National Congress therefore mandated a National Commission whose task would be the reintroduction of Turkish into all official documents and posts, and the ensuring of its inclusion into the curriculum of all schools.

The statement of policy issued by the National Congress was an even more important document¹ than the declaration, although some of its points exhibit a close similarity to the declaration. It concentrated upon the demands for democracy and autonomy being made in Azerbaijan as being legitimate in international terms and also loyal to the Constitutional Law within Iran itself. Such demands did not represent a wish for secession from Iran nor a willingness for a violation of Iran's integrity and independence. The National Congress declared that since Azerbaijan could be considered a nation it should be allowed national autonomy in the form of a provincial council which would operate as a national parliament, and proposed the candidates for these elections, as well as those for the Iranian parliament. The national parliament would give to Azerbaijan the good law required for the determination of its own destiny, denied to it by Tehran, and would ensure political, economic, educational and cultural freedom for the establishment of autonomy. Power to implement such measures by removing central government officials from their posts, enforcing the teaching of Turkish in all schools, and elimination of

1. Pisyān, N., Marg Būd Bāzgasht Ham Būd, Tehran, 1326/1947, pp.61-3.

treacherous elements within the police and army, was given to a National Commission. Members of the National Congress had power to supervise the elections to the National parliament, and to safeguard the Commission by all possible means.

In Pīshavarī's closing speech,¹ he stressed the need for close supervision of elections to prevent corruption; the need to inform foreign nations, the central government, and above all, **Azerbaijanis** themselves, of the Party's aims; and the urgent necessity of preparing a manifesto for the National parliament, setting the mode and date of elections, how many MPs there were to be (in the national government and parliament), and defining the constituencies. By the time the Congress disbanded, the National Commission had set the date for the elections for November 21st.

The elections in Azerbaijan² for the National parliament constituted the first in Iranian history to be conducted fairly. The electorate had been warned to ignore any propaganda and trust only those candidates whom they knew to be worthy. Those who were not members of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* had the right to stand for independent election. In response to the pure nature of the election procedures, the majority of **Azerbaijanis** actually participated in the voting, for the first time.³ Over 5 days, approximately 23,951 votes were gathered in Tabriz.⁴ The large number corresponds to the conviction of the electorate and to the lack of pressure or coercion, as can be seen quite clearly from the low number cast in ten days in the elections for the 14th *Majlis* held a few months previously. Despite coercion to vote from the central government through

1. Supra. National Congress, 3rd Session, November 20, 1945.

2. New York Times, op. cit. Lenczowski, S., Russia and the West in Iran 1918-48, New York, 1949.

3. Āzarbāyjān 69, 12th Āzar, 1324 (3rd December, 1945).

4. Oniki-yi-Shahrīvar, op. cit., p.31.

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bribery etc., the poll was only 11,000, indicating that most people were indifferent, or did not trust the central government. The November 21st elections demonstrated the trust which the Azerbaijani people placed in the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, on the other hand, for the total number of votes cast, Pīshavarī as its leader, gained 23,550.

The results of the elections clearly illustrated the popularity achieved by the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt. At the same time, they also encouraged the Party to go ahead in opening the National parliament. The elections were so successful in proving the unity of purpose of the Azerbaijanis that even the opposition element were not able to deny the appeal of the Party. Its success silenced those who were most antagonistic to the Firqa's claim to be the party which most represented the people. Despite this, however, the central government endeavoured to play down the Party's popularity as it was reflected in the elections results. Their propaganda suggested that the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt gained its support not from local Azerbaijanis but rather from Russians who had crossed the border to vote for a party led by a handful of adventurers.¹ This assertion is also reflected in the reports that appeared in the foreign press.²

Despite this propaganda the growth was very rapid; from creation to government took only a period of 3 months from September 3rd to December 12th and must have been grounded in a majority of support. This could have well been despite any assistance proffered from the Soviet Union in military or financial terms. Socialism cannot be readily exported unless the ground is ready to receive it and although the Azerbaijani

1. Partin, M.W., U.S.-Iranian Relations, Ph.D. thesis, North Texas, 1977, p.103. Pisyani, op. cit., p.37.

2. London Times, 29th April, 1946. Muller, "Behind the Scenes in Azerbaijan", American Mercury, June 1946, p.701.

people were not aware of socialism, the circumstances for its reception, in the face even of the strong religious element, prevailed: in particular the suppression by the central government prepared the region for the democratic movement.

(4) Azerbaijan's National Government

The purpose of the establishment of a National Government and its aims were definite and clear-cut from conception through to fulfilment. It is, of course, true that the initial desire of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* did not include the formation of an autonomous government. Yet despite their deflection as a result of non-cooperation by the central government, their demand for the upholding of constitutional law - i.e. democratic rights - in Azerbaijan did not change. While the *Firqa* had originally envisaged the agent to be the central government, it finally took the job into its own hands and thereby set up the National Government of Azerbaijan, in order to establish and maintain the liberty and rights of the Azerbaijani people in Azerbaijan.

The National Government took office and started work straight after December 12th.¹ What the ministers lacked in experience they made up for in dedication. Pīshavarī, as Prime Minister,² was able to lead and to guide with his political background and expertise.³

The actual day on which the National parliament opened,

1. *Rahbar* 658, 29 Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

2. The other ministers were: Bīriyā - Education; Jāvid - Interior; Kāviyān - Defence; Ilhāmī - Finance; Rasūlī - Commerce and Economics; Āzīmā - Justice; Mahtāsh - Agriculture; Awrangī - Health; Kabīrī - Post & Telegraph. Note that there were ministers neither of Foreign Affairs nor of War. See *Rahbar* 656, 27th Āzar, 1324 (18th December, 1945), 658, 29th Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

3. For more details of parliament procedure, see *Āzarbāyjān* 79, 23rd Āzar, 1324 (14th December, 1945).

December 12th, is of particular significance due to two factors. Here, the twin rôle played by the central committee is of vital importance. Members of the central committee were appointed as heads of the local *Fidā'ī* groups (General *Khabīrī* in *Marāgha*, *Dānishiyan* in *Miyāna*, and *Panāhiyan* in *Tabriz*) and their organisation concerning the safeguarding of the electoral proceedings on this day, as well as the personal safety of the candidates, played the largest instrumental part in ensuring its unspoilt and uninterrupted conclusion. *Fidā'ī* groups from outside the city were brought in to surround *Tabriz*, while the local group disarmed the police and army, who threatened to break up the proceedings; barracks were taken over all through *Azerbaijan*, such as *Ajabashīr*, *Marāgha*, etc.

Simultaneously, other members of the central committee were given the responsibility of removing governmental officials from office, and taking over government buildings and posts. It was thus due to the efficiency and dedication to their cause exhibited by the central committee that through the confusion and disturbance inevitably caused by the takeover, the National Parliament was guaranteed the necessary circumstances in which to carry out its programme. *Pīshavarī* was elected Prime Minister; parliament requested him, as a matter of urgency, to make known his Cabinet and to present his programme for the National government that same afternoon.

The first objective that the Government deemed most urgent, was a cleaning-up operation of all those government officials at present in office who were part of the widespread corruption which was prevalent. It was an arduous and lengthy task, since most were remnants from *Riṣā Shāh's* long dictatorial rule;¹ yet the new ministers were aware of their responsibilities to the people and were anxious for it to be done as quickly as possible.

1. *Āzarbāyjan*, 23rd *Āzar*, 1324 (14th December, 1945).

Their second aim concerned the prosperity of the province.¹ With this in mind, the National Government issued a declaration setting out the steps by which they proposed to achieve their goal:²

1. the private sector of the Azerbaijan economy was to be restricted.

2. all offices were to come under the supervision of the National Government, while all officials would be expected to carry out their duties efficiently and responsibly.

3. obedient officials would be rewarded through the improvement and grant of appropriate work conditions, those who shirked their work would be dismissed.

The National Government had been formed in order to improve the quality of life in Azerbaijan, and every member of society therein had a role to play. Everyone was expected thus to participate in the efforts to build up society by working industriously and conducting themselves in honest behaviour. Those who created friction or were a disturbing influence upon the public in any way, or who embezzled from employers, or who failed to work to the best of their ability would be regarded as enemies of the people and treated as such.

All officials were to devote themselves to the welfare of Azerbaijan and her people, and the National Government was prepared to do all it could to encourage and realize this attitude.

The issue of this declaration, together with the personal dedication among the individual members of the Government, did much to effect a considerable up-grading of the reputation of the Azerbaijan bureaucracy, for the populace quickly recognised the sincerity and determination within the National Government with respect to its promises.³

The Cabinet announced to all the Foreign Diplomats living

1. Rossow, R., "The Battle of Azerbaijan, 1946", MEJ, vol.10, 1956, p.19.

2. Tabari, K., op. cit., p.218.

3. See Chapter 5 passim.

within Azerbaijan that they were quite at liberty to remain and their safety would be guaranteed. This also applied to any foreign nationals residing temporarily or permanently in the province. It was also announced that the government had taken over responsibility for the finances of the province. State officials would be allocated responsibility over parts of this but any laxity or dishonesty would be brought to a court of law.¹

In conjunction with this operation, the National Government began steps to re-deploy and re-organise the three branches of the security-forces; the army, the police and the gendarmerie.²

Alongside police and army reforms, the gendarmes also laid down their arms, and left their posts. At the time of the formation of the National Government the gendarmerie had been arresting a large number of people and jailing them. The Parliament then approved a general amnesty for all prisoners, put into effect upon the surrender of the gendarmes, an act which seemingly ended this source of disturbance. The National Commission, prior to the Government, had tried to secure the release of these prisoners, but the act was only fully completed upon the passing of the amnesty.

The last, and most difficult stage, was the subjugation of the army. The delicacy of this problem was compounded by the fact that the army took its orders from Tehran, where the government - unimpressed by the provincial opposition - was at no pains to find a peaceful solution.

Colonel Darakhshānī, commander of the 3rd Division of the army in Tabriz, tried to resolve the difficulty by

1. See Chapter 5, section on court reform.

2. See Chapter 5 for reform of police and army.

requesting orders from Tehran.¹ They arrived at 8pm on December 13th, instructing him to call a meeting of his senior officers towards reaching a decision concerning the best course of action to adopt - in other words, whether or not resistance was practicable.² The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* in turn put considerable pressure upon Darakhshānī for a quick decision, especially because it was widely believed that the central government was intending opposition. It was a suspicion harboured even more readily since the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Arfa, was a particularly right-wing officer, son of an English woman and hence thought to be pro-British, and a monarchist sympathiser. The suggestion of his involvement encouraged the belief among Azerbaijanis that the supposed plot was his inspiration, and hence many lives might be lost.³

Simultaneously with Darakhshānī's meeting, Pīshavarī invited the officers to another meeting, at which he explained the aims of the newly-formed National Government, the importance of the army's surrender, and the danger of resistance.⁴ As a result, a truce was duly signed between the army and the National Government of Azerbaijan.

The terms of the truce⁵ arranged for the army's laying down of its arms, and co-operation with the National

1. Darakhshānī, interview in *Firman*, in which he was asked whether it was his personal decision to surrender, or a direct order from Teheran. He replied that it was his own, since he feared the strength of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and he thus asked Teheran to give their approval to this decision; see *Rahbar* 656, 27th Āzar, 1324, (18th December, 1945).

2. *Rahbar*, *op. cit.*

3. For more details, see: Arfa, *Under Five Shahs*, *passim*.

4. Personal interview with Col. Javādiyān (August, 1982), who was present at Pīshavarī's meeting.

5. *Rahbar* 656, 27th Āzar, 1324 (18th December, 1945).

Government. The document, signed in duplicate, decreed that for the short term period, the army was to be confined to its barracks until further notice, so that the National Government could organise all the necessary provisions, and supervise the collection of munitions. All the officers were given the free choice to leave Azerbaijan under the safe conduct of the National Government, if they did not wish to remain and co-operate with the new authority.¹ Those wishing to stay would be required to take an oath of loyalty, and would thereafter resume their commissions and live in good conditions. After swearing the oath, all ranks would be returned their arms and recommence normal duties.

After the truce was signed, Darakhshānī then requested the publication of a declaration on the day following, December 14th, which ran as follows:

"Tabriz barracks lay down arms"

According to the decision of the meeting of senior officers, to prevent bloodshed, and in deference to the wishes of various groups including merchants, it was agreed that the Tabriz barracks would lay down arms and respect the truce between Darakhshānī and Pīshavarī, which was signed by Darakhshānī, Commander of the Third Division, December 14.²

Yet despite these commitments, the agreement under the 2nd article of the truce was quickly broken by Colonel Bahrāmī³ when he encouraged his officers to disregard the curfew that had therein been imposed upon the barracks. The officers' lead was followed by their men, and the night was spent in wrecking and looting their accommodation. Ammunition

1. Personal interview with Col. Javādiyān (August 1982), who exemplifies those army officers who chose to leave.

2. Rahbar 659, 30th Āzar, 1324 (21st December, 1945).

3. Personal interview with Col. Sharīfī and Col. Javādiyān, March 1982 and August 1982.

was also seized and distributed throughout the town - a dangerous act which might have caused considerable bloodshed in spite of the motive of sabotage. The same thing happened under Col. Zangana¹ in Urūmiyya. This was avoided mainly as a result of the prompt and courageous response of the **Fidā'īs**, supported by the National Government and its appeal for calm from the people in the face of what was regarded as a plot inspired by the central government.

The remainder of the army units within Azerbaijan also submitted with little or no resistance. The few protests were easily overcome by the National Government, and the violence was in fact on a much lower scale than that reported by Tehran.² Celebrations and street parties followed throughout Azerbaijan as expression of their relief at the successful accomplishment of what had been expected or anticipated as a formidable task. They reflected, too, appreciation of the wisdom and ability of the National Government in its avoidance of bloodshed.

It was recognised, however, that major tasks still lay ahead in the form of continued opposition from several quarters. Not only was the central government irate: Azerbaijan had now become the focus of international attention, and was thus attracting slander and denigration from multiple sources. These included opportunists, hoarders; landowners (such as Zulfaqārī and Yamīn Lasharī^k in Zanjān); smugglers and criminals supported and armed by Tehran.³ False propaganda concerning supposed **Azerbaijani** 'separatism'⁴ and 'atheism',⁵

1. Personal interview with Col. Sharīfī and Col. Javādiyān, March 1982 and August 1982.

2. For more details, see Pisyān, op. cit., passim.

3. This verified by eye-witnesses in a personal interview with Dr. A. Pūrī and Mr. Iskandarī, and Mrs. Naqshīna.

4. Rahbar 644, 11th Āzar, 1324 (2nd December, 1945).

5. Ibid. 646, 13th Āzar, 1324 (4th December, 1945).

and claiming the movement had a Russian, not indigenous Azerbaijani¹ base, from the central government mushroomed, in proportion to its fear that other parts of Iran might follow Azerbaijan's lead. In order to deal with these threats, the National Government concentrated upon the organisation and deployment of the *Fidā'ī*.

The *Fidā'ī* were divided into two groups: one continued their normal duties, with arms; the other was subdivided into sections to provide defence. The basic problem facing the National Government, however, came in the form of their inability to provide either group with basic essentials. The *Fidā'ī* constituted^{is led}, in the majority, of workers, peasants and other non-privileged volunteers. Yet with no money forthcoming from the central government, the National Government did not have the wherewithal even to feed or clothe them. The answer was found in the re-opening of those factories that had been closed and the commencement of production, and this source was further supplemented by generous donations from the general populace - a measure of the groups' popularity which was effected by the introduction of a system of government bonds and a just tax system.² As a result, the *Fidā'ī* gained in self confidence and pride, establishing groups in places such as Marāgha, Sarāb, Ardabīl and even Zanjān. They possessed a strong motivation and moral urge, yet their offer to march on Tehran and take over the capital was turned down.

Such an action was representative of the typical approach adopted by the National Government. There are several reasons to indicate that in this case, however, it was a mistaken one

1. For more details, see *Rahbar* 647-8, 14th-15th Āzar (5th-6th December, 1945), 649-654, 16th-22nd Āzar (7th-12th December, 1945).

2. Cf. Chapter 5 for more details of the labour movement and taxation system.

that should have been avoided. The lesson from the past should have intimated to the Government that Tehran had always succeeded in crushing previous democratic movements, and would try to do the same now.¹ If in fact, they had marched on Tehran, in the opinion of many observers² the broad sympathy towards their cause, derived from general dissatisfaction, would have given them ample support to end the oppression of the central government. Although this was not in fact done, there did take place negotiations between Pīshavarī and Qavām, during which a useless provisional treaty was attempted. During the ensuing three months of negotiation, the suppression of the Democratic Movement was planned; and its execution is described in Chapter 6.

(5) Reaction Against the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt

It is appropriate to divide the reaction against the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt into two parts, internal and external. These correspond to pressure which came from within Iran, primarily from the central government, and to international coverage of the movement, both from the West and from the Soviet Union. At points, the two aspects merge into one and we will indicate as much.

The central government played a major role in the reaction against the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt on two fronts, as it were. The Firqa, in its first three months, was a rapidly growing movement which was attracting widespread support within Azerbaijan. It was able to recruit members from all segments and strata of society towards the pursuit of democratic ideals and autonomy for Azerbaijan. It thus posed

1. A. Āzarī, Qiyām-i Kulūnīl Muḥammad Taqī Khan-i Pisyān, Teheran, 1950, and Shaykh Muḥammad Khiyabānī, Teheran, 1944, *passim*.

2. A similar drawing of implications exists in Āzarbāyjān 212, 9th Khordād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

an increasing threat and challenge to the conservative elements which dominated the central government. This, then, was a confrontation between rival groups struggling for power. On the other hand, the central government itself was split and divided amongst itself at this time. The foci of these dual aspects related to Azerbaijan as a province, and secondly to Tehran.

The immediate policy adopted by the central government towards the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was suppression leading to its elimination.¹ The campaign had been initiated by action against progressives and radicals throughout Iran. Trade unions were shut down and the leader of the movement (*Rūstā*)² was arrested. It was in fact at this period also that the terrorisation by gendarmes ran at its most brutal.³

The terrorisation employed by the central government was aimed towards preventing any successful implementation of social and democratic reform, and autonomy which would lead eventually to a democratic government in Azerbaijan. It was to a large extent, however, a blind policy. The central government was during this period suffering an acute crisis of factionalism.⁴ The premiership changed hands alternately between *Ṣadr* and *Hakīmī*. Both were in actual fact under British influence (as indeed was most of the government),⁵ and the British favoured the government status quo against the

1. *Rahbar* 632, 25th *Murdād*, 1324 (16th August, 1945); 632-4, 25th-29th *Murdād*, 1324 (16th-20th August, 1945); 637, 1st *Shahrīvar*, 1324 (23rd August, 1945).

2. Cronin, S.M., *Industrial Agitation and Tribal Unrest in South Iran 1946*, M.A. Dissertation, 1981, p.65.

3. *Rahbar* 633-4, 25th-26th *Murdād*, 1324 (17th-18th August, 1945); 637, 1st *Shahrīvar*, 1324 (23rd August, 1945).

4. *Ābrahīmian*, "Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-6)", *MES*, vol.14, no.1, *passim*.

5. *Kay Ustavān*, *Siyāsāt-i Muvāzana-yi Manfī dar Majlis-i Chahārdahum*, vol.I, Teheran 1949, pp.127-8. *New York Times*, 5th December, 1945.

democratic movement in Iran. Šadr's appointment was resisted by the nationalist minority in the **Majlis**, led by Mušaddiq.¹ They refused to take their seats on the grounds that Šadr was (constitutionally) too old; his anti-constitutionalism and collaboration with Rīzā Shāh's dictatorship was well known; and the vote was inquorate (68 out of 125 did not constitute a three-quarters majority).² Ḥakīmī, who was Mušaddiq's last resort and was backed by Sayyid Ziyā and ultimately, therefore by the Shāh, pressed for a stronger government to deal, as they saw it, with the Soviets. Qavām, and the other members of the Democrat **Frāksiyūn**, on the other hand, sought progressive democracy, the aim, too, of the the Tudeh Party.

The Records of Procedure of the **Majlis** indicate that the parliament was too caught up both in personality and power conflicts to be capable of formulating an adequate or realistic opinion of the aims of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**. It therefore came to the mistaken conclusion that the **Firqa** was simply an artificial party made up of adventurers and manipulated by traitors.³ The military option that was adopted on these grounds ultimately foundered on the resistance to the gendarmes, and the non-co-operation of the Soviet Union.

During the crisis, the Soviet Union professed to regard the movement as a democratic movement struggling against the reactionary approach of the central government, and treated it as a legitimate indigenous demand for local rights,⁴ refusing to allow the central government to send reinforcement troops to her garrisons in Northern Iran. She stated that repression led to bloodshed and an increased troop presence would mean an escalation of unnecessary violence;⁵ she also desired to follow

1. Razm, year 1, no.109, pp.453-454.

2. Ibid.

3. New York Times, 5th, 6th, and 9th December, 1945.

4. Rahbar 643, 10th Āzar, 1324 (1st December, 1945).

5. For more details, see Rahbar 648, 15th Āzar, 1324 (6th December, 1945).

a policy of non-interference. It was the opinion of the Soviet Union that the problems of the North were caused by the central government; no government should need recourse to such measures if it held the confidence of its people. The Soviets would therefore guarantee the non-participation of troops in the terror imposed by the gendarmes.

The central government subsequently took up a different track, upon diplomatic lines. A more subtle plan was adopted by which it was hoped that the Azerbaijan people could be deceived if an ostensibly efficient and sympathetic governor were appointed. Able to win their support, his offers of reform would in actual fact be a pretence, yet would, it was hoped, persuade the people to turn against the Party leaders. Bayāt¹ was given the post, and indeed was an excellent politician. This plan failed, too, however, for the Firqa's leadership was politically mature and saw through the central government's attempt to use them as pawns in a political chess game. The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt was able to counteract the government's propaganda with its own, and restrict the effectiveness of the former. Therefore its position was strengthened among the **Azerbaijanis** as a consequence of the dichotomous approach employed by the Tehran government.

The propaganda campaign undertaken by the central government had widespread repercussions in the international arena.² Britain especially felt the situation to be a particularly sensitive one for her position in the Middle East,³

1. For details of the Bayāt deception, see Rahbar 648, 15th Āzar, 1324 (6th December, 1945), and 649, 16th Āzar, 1324 (7th December, 1945); and New York Times, 30th November, 1945.

2. Pisyān, op. cit., p.31; London Times, April 29, 1946; Rahbar 644-5, 11th and 12th Āzar, 1324 (2nd and 3rd December, 1945), 649-650, 16th and 18th Āzar (7th and 9th December), 653, 21st Āzar, 1324 (12th December, 1945).

3. For a more comprehensive understanding, see Kuramangalam, M., Iran at the Crossroads, Bombay, 1946, passim.

and accordingly turned what were originally, and in essence, internally Iranian affairs into the focus of world attention.¹

This centred first of all on international press coverage of the supposed march on Tehran by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, armed with Soviet weapons, on November 19th.² Reuters announced that London believed or suspected that such an event could not be organised without the support of the Soviet Union. The conclusion thus drawn by Britain was that the Soviets intended a take-over of Iran and it was therefore Britain's duty to intervene to prevent this and in some way to safeguard Iran's democracy and independence, which she saw threatened by the separatist *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* movement. However, Bevin's note³ to the Soviet Union asking permission for Iranian troops to move into Iranian Azerbaijan was answered with a firm rebuttal, which indicated that the Soviets believed the central government to be at fault, and that it should not need additional troops in Azerbaijan, if indeed it held the confidence of the people.⁴ Britain, still fearful that such a democratic movement should spread outwards from Iran, took the matter to the U.N.,⁵ where she was supported by the Iranian representatives, who reflected the views of the central government. In this way, external opinion was given to believe that the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was a separatist movement,⁶ whose victory was to be decried; the local Iranians were by the same measures and means kept ignorant of the actual nature of the *Firqa*. The U.N. delegates, 'Alā' and Taqīzāda,

1. *Āzarbāyjān* 212, 9th Khordād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

2. Kuramangalam, *op. cit.*

3. Pisyān, *op. cit.*, p.45.

4. For the full communication between SU/GB/Iran, see Pisyān, *op. cit.*, pp.34-8.

5. London *Times*, 6-8 May, 1946. *Āzarbāyjān* 212, 9th Khordād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

6. *Rahbar* 644, 11th Āzar, 1324 (2nd December, 1945).

were in fact double instruments of the British¹ and Iranian governments: on the insistence of the British, the central government encouraged its U.N. representatives to take the problem to the General Assembly, and thus turn it into an international issue. Its status as an international problem would give the central government weight to force the Soviet Union to withdraw its support of the movement, and leave Tehran free to crush it.

We can thus see quite clearly the process whereby the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** came to be labelled as a separatist movement: it was a necessary ploy of the central government, in its attempt to remove Soviet influence against the crushing of the movement, to declare it to be a separatist movement since only as such could it be constituted as an international problem and be brought to the U.N. Not only so, but the fundamental instigation came from the British, who were suffering under the Cold War atmosphere and were fighting fiercely any suspected attempt of Soviet-backed movements spreading in any part of the world. If it had so wanted, world opinion could easily have understood the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** as an autonomous movement on the model of the United States' system of State government. In its refusal to accept this view, the prevailing attitude persisted in identifying 'autonomy' with 'separatism', declining to recognise that political, cultural or economic autonomy was being sought by the **Firqa** solely for an Azerbaijan **within** Iran. The party was seeking for popular participation, so that Iran could be united as a country.

If historical facts are accepted, it will be seen that the really disruptive movement was that among the Southern tribes,² who were acting under the influence of the British. As a

1. Āzarbāyjān 212, 9th Khordād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

2. See Chapter 6, section 3.

planned warning as to the consequences of an autonomous Azerbaijan, the British encouraged the Southern tribes to agitate for their own autonomy, to show how the idea would snowball throughout all Iran.¹ The Southern tribes had formed a precedent in that respect already in the 1920s,² with the British using Shaykh Khaz^cal on that occasion. In contrast to the Southern tribes, the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** was truly democratic, its aims directed towards an end to the discrimination against Azerbaijan by the central government,³ an end to British influence in and over Iran, and to Sayyid Ṣiyā's terrorisation connected with it,⁴ and to end up finally with the setting up of a democratic government initially in Azerbaijan, and then to Tehran.

Despite the misrepresentation of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** within Iran, the populace soon understood its true nature and aim: the march on Tehran never materialised; the **Firqa** realised its promised reforms within Azerbaijan and indicated that they were thus not simply empty verbalisations. It further confirmed its desire to co-operate with the central government by accepting the peace treaty proffered by Qavām, both to diffuse the slander, and to show that it was indeed autonomy and not separation, that the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** wanted.

The central government propaganda against the movement was in the long term to the advantage of the **Firqa** and Azerbaijan: the highlighting of the political, geographical, historical and economic importance of Azerbaijan focused attention on the **Azerbaijanis** as a nation, different from the other nationalities in Iran, with their own language, customs,

1. See Chapter 6, section 3.

2. See Chapter 1, p.32.

3. See Chapter 6, section 3.

4. Rahbar 644, 11th Āzar, 1324 (2nd December, 1945).

etc. It was pointed out that Azerbaijan was ethnically different from the rest of Iran not only within Iran, but also in the international press.¹ It was this kind of national identity which lay at the heart of this considerable enthusiasm for autonomy and which inspired the impetus which encouraged the badly-needed reforms, which were executed by the National government and are to be discussed in the following chapter.

1. London Times, May 11, 1946.

CHAPTER 5

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FIRQA-YI DIMŪKRĀT

When the National Government of Azerbaijan was established under the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, its main aim was directed towards a comprehensive reform of all Azerbaijan, since the province had for the past 20 years during the rule of Rīzā Shāh, been totally ignored and neglected, as we have attempted to show in the previous chapter. The reforms enacted in the single year that the National Government survived exceeded all those introduced throughout the previous 20 years. They included land reform, division of land among the peasants, re-opening factories or building new ones, generally reducing unemployment, reconstruction of cities, resurfacing of roads, creating *Fidā'ī* groups, establishing the National Army of Azerbaijan, improving education, introducing a national health service, reducing the crime rate, lowering of inflation, prohibition of profiteering and the black market, and ending the coupon system.¹ Law was made equal for all Azerbaijani citizens, the national language was made the official one, even in government documents. A theatre holding 800, and 50 general hospitals, with 700 beds were built.²

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was created in order to fulfil what it saw as the wishes of the people of Azerbaijan, and to take the destiny of Azerbaijan into their hands in order to defend the territory from the conservative and arbitrary central government rule. One of their goals was to use their income to

1. *Ẓafar* 283, 28th Khurdād, 1325, 27th Urdībihisht, 1325 (16th June and 17th May, 1946).

2. *Ibid.* 363, 4th Mihr, 1325 (26th September, 1946); *Dād*, 23rd Khurdād, 1325 (13th June, 1946).

effect the necessary reforms that were long-overdue. Pīshavarī declared: "We are not against capitalism. On the contrary, we can use capital to reform Azerbaijan. We are trying to make Azerbaijan a wealthy province. Therefore, our wealthy people are not detrimental to us but rather, can benefit us all. We take advantage of their work to use it for the benefit of Iran. We do not have class conflict: we want democracy for all Iranians".¹ He thus encouraged both public and private enterprise.²

The reforms of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were achieved in such a short period of time primarily due to the support given both to the party and to its programme throughout Azerbaijan.³ According to the newspaper *Dād*, in support of eyewitness accounts, the workers were willing to do whatever needed to be done whenever it was required, and tried to match the rapidity of the reforms with the speed of their own labour.⁴ The party quickly reached a position of power, and acquired much popular support, since the *Azerbaijanis* recognised the oppressive and inefficient nature of the central government's dealings with Azerbaijan. They resented the apparent disparagement of Azerbaijan made by local government officials; and the peasants, who were subject to harsh treatment at the hands of local landowners, backed by the gendarmerie, decided to turn to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* as being what they saw as the only viable alternative. Thus young and old, peasants and landowners, workers and employers alike gave their support to the party.⁵

1. *Āzarbāyjān* 1, 14th Shahrīvar, 1324 (5th September, 1945); 5, 26th Shahrīvar, 1324 (17th September, 1945).

2. See labour movement below.

3. See Chapter 4.

4. *Dād*, 3rd Murdād, 1325 (25th July, 1946); and also various personal interviews with appropriate contemporary figures, summer 1982.

5. *Ibid.*, 7th Murdād, 1325 (29th July, 1946).

The **Mailis** refused to pass **Pīshavarī**'s credentials, because of their fear that he might press Russian policies and, consequently **Azerbaijani** discontents were given a chance to participate in their own political development. According even to Central Government sources, local branches of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** were established and quickly sprang up throughout Azerbaijan where people were free to meet for political discussion, represented by all strata of society. Where no local branches existed, local people would join together and request instructions from the party. In different areas there would occasionally be competition in forming local branches.¹

One influential newspaper comments that **Pīshavarī** and and the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** leaders realised first of all the social and economic ramifications of the central government's 20 year policy towards Azerbaijan. During WWII, prices and inflation had soared. One of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**'s first aims was to reduce prices by 40% throughout Azerbaijan,² and thus set up a series of 'government shops'. Foods and materials were supplied to these and then sold at a special low fixed price. Custom was attracted to the government shops away from others, forcing these to lower their prices in turn, with the general effect of lowering inflation and ending the coupon system previously in operation.³

Pīshavarī was anxious to put a stop to the coupon system, whose disadvantages he saw clearly when it was introduced in Tehran by the Millspaugh Mission,⁴ for it produced and stimulated black-market trading. The black market further encouraged hoarding, since suppliers knew that by creating shortages they could demand higher prices. It also

1. Personal interview with Mr. Iskandarī, September 1982.

2. Īrān-i Mā 861, 8th Aban, 1326 (30th October, 1947).

3. Dād, 22nd Khurdād, 1325 (12th June, 1946).

4. Millspaugh, Americans in Persia, Washington, 1946, p.141.

increased corruption through the production of counterfeit coupons.¹

Two types of government shops were created: one where payment was in ready cash, and the second, which extended credit with a 12% interest rate.²

With this 40% decrease in prices, food became much cheaper. 3 kilos of bread which would previously have cost 11 rials, now only cost 6 rials. House rents also came down. Since inflation was reduced, civil servants, despite receiving 25% less than the rest of Iran, were not in real terms any worse off than these, according to the C.C.U.T.U.³

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* leaders reportedly also took great interest in the telegraph system operated in Azerbaijan. because it was felt to be vitally important for communication. Within 2 to 3 months, it was running more efficiently than the Tehran system had ever functioned.⁴

Pīshavarī was keen that the wealth of Iran should be used wisely and effectively. Thus, for example, he is known to have ensured that large lorries that had been imported from America but which had lain idle in Tabriz simply for the want of spare parts or for minor faults, were repaired and restored to working order. They subsequently then became a great asset to Azerbaijan.⁵

A public works programme figured largely in the immediate purposes of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*. Road repair and

1. Dād, 8th Mordād, 1325 (30th July, 1946).

2. Ibid., 9th Mordād, 1325 (31st July, 1946).

3. Zafar 363, 4th Mīhr, 1325 (26th September, 1946).

4. Dād, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th Tīr, 1325 (15th, 16th, 17th, 18th July, 1946).

5. Ibid., 13th Mordād, 1325 (4th August, 1946).

construction, schools, hospitals, environmental concern, sport complexes, port maintenance, etc. were all part of the reforms envisaged and implemented. We can best see the achievements made through looking at the reforms enacted in Tabrīz, Marand, Khuy and Rīzā'īyya (Urūmiyya).

It is well known that the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, while instituting reforms throughout Azerbaijan, were naturally concerned primarily with the condition of the capital, Tabriz. People enthusiastically welcomed the proposed reforms, and actively participated in their implementation: the streets of Tabriz, for example were tarmaced by workers during the night to cause minimum disturbance, and one street was so finished in only a few nights.¹ An unbiased source reported that the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** was able to transform a graveyard into a public square in only 6 days due to the eagerness and willingness of the workers. The National Square was then used by civilians for military manoeuvres every morning, and as a speaker's podium, since a platform was also erected.²

The enthusiasm of workers was further exhibited in the restoration of the Shāh Qolī park, where builders worked 24 hours a day to get it finished quickly. Shāh Qolī, one of the largest parks in Azerbaijan, situated in the south of Tabriz, was one of great beauty, with a lake in its centre. The park had been built by ^cAbbās Mīrzā Qājār to provide a communal leisure centre, and in the hope of using the lake as an emergency supply of water. Nothing of this sort was ever built under Rīzā Shāh, and those parks that had been made were left unattended, almost becoming animal reservations. Pīshavarī, however, began to take great interest in Shāh Qolī and determined to restore it to its former glory. The lake was cleaned, trees and shrubs planted, a generator was installed

1. Dād, 25th Tīr, 1325 (16th July, 1946).

2. Ibid., 9th Mordād, 1325 (31st July, 1946).

to provide electricity to light the park, and Pīshavarī had built on the east side a mental hospital, within the grounds of the park.¹ A newspaper article stated that the governor's residence, the Tabriz Ustāndārī, was another building which the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* restored after its fall into disrepair during Rīzā Shāh's rule. Pīshavarī took the building in hand, had it repaired, redecorated, modernised, and planted flowers and trees in its grounds.²

Several sources confirm that a major and unique feature in the provinces, was the erection of Tabriz radio station. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were concerned that unbiased and true reports of the situation in Azerbaijan should be heard, instead of the portrayal given by Radio Tehran, the central government, national papers and even foreign correspondents.³ Radio Tabriz was welcomed and not only within Azerbaijan or even Iran, but in neighbouring and distant countries as a voice of democracy and freedom.⁴ In order to play down the achievements of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, however, Tehran was saying that the party had not in fact established a station but were really disguising it as Radio Baku heard in Tabriz. The reality was that the radio station was built within 10 days, equipped with receiving equipment bought from the Soviet Union, and a young clerk from the school of Post and Telegraph studies in Tehran was put in control. Radio Tabriz reputedly had a better range of programmes and a more powerful transmitter than Radio Tehran.⁵

1. *Dād*, 3rd Mordād, 1325 (25th July, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*, 25th Tir, 1325 (16th July, 1946).

3. *Zafar* 283, 26th Khurdād, 1325 (16th June, 1946); personal interview with Gen. K. Javādiyān, August, 1982.

4. Personal interview with Gen. M. Iskandarī, August 1982.

5. *Dād*, 4th Mordād, 1325 (26th July, 1946).

Radio Tabriz instituted the practice of going out into the streets to speak with the people, gathering their opinions and asking for information. It devoted a few hours a day also to a programme especially for Kurds; and to this end in Mahābād the capital of Kurdistan, a local studio was set up with four microphones.¹ This Kurdish programme was misunderstood in Tehran and *Īrān-i Mā* insisted that, "Now, Kurds have their own radio station".² It is generally accepted that Tabriz radio played an important part in the Azerbaijan movement, giving full and accurate reports concerning contemporary Azerbaijan affairs.

Perhaps the other most important feature introduced by Pīshavarī was the installation of running water in Tabriz. The pipes were brought from the Soviet Union, at a cost of 15 million rials, and a total length of 31 miles laid within Tabriz.³

Many well-known cultural reforms were also instituted: and there was constructed a large theatre, in which films on economics and politics, entertainment and education were shown.⁴ The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* broadened their cultural horizons, too, by founding an Irano-Russian Society, where discussions of both cultures were held, and eminent figures from both countries were invited to speak.⁵

Education in both its practical and theoretical aspects was encouraged. Apart from many ordinary high schools built, one for training railway drivers and engineers was set up, for there was a severe shortage of labourers on the railways,

1. *Dād*, 6th Murdād, 1325 (28th July, 1946).

2. *Īrān-i Mā*, 1st, 2nd Khurdad, 1325 (22nd and 23rd,

3. *Dād*, 13th Murdād, 1325 (4th August, 1946).

4. *Ibid.*, 10th Murdād, 1325 (1st August, 1946).

5. *Ibid.*, 11th Murdād, 1325 (2nd July, 1946).

and even following the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, management of the railways was still largely in Soviet hands.¹ This circumstance resulted partly because no Azerbaijani had yet completed the course, and because Tehran had delayed sending the requested specialists to take over from the Russians.² A military academy, police school and the University of Tabriz were all established by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* to serve the whole of Azerbaijan.³

The people of Azerbaijan, more so perhaps than any other in Iran, were devoted to the ancient history and glory of Iran, her independence and integrity. This is clear from the erection under Pīshavarī of numbers of statues of the great figures of the past throughout towns in Azerbaijan, a circumstance that was unique in Iran. Statues of *Shāh* ^c*Abbās* the Great and *Nādir Shāh*, for example, were common in the province; Pīshavarī replaced a statue of *Riżā Shāh* in *Bagh-i-Gulistān*, one of Tabriz's parks, with that of *Sattār Khān*, who was regarded as the national hero and defender of the Constitution in Iran.⁴ Thereby can be seen the respect held by all **Azerbaijanis** for the ancient history of Iran, and her national heroes.

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*'s reforms were not limited to the major cities, but extended to smaller towns, such as Marand, for example. Marand is a town about 26 miles from Tabriz with a population of 12,000. It is known that within 2 or 3 months of reforms being instituted, all Marand's streets had been tarmaced, and 15,000 trees planted; a road three miles long was built between Marand and Yazjī; public baths, 3 schools and 3 clubs, a national park and a library constructed, the

1. *Dād*, 21 Tīr, 1325 (12th July, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*

3. See Sections below.

4. *Dād*, 14th Khurdād, 1325 (4th June, 1946).

latter providing night-classes for a total of 240 men and 60 women. Communally life was improved through the establishment of a hospital which had vaccination facilities, and the town council budget was raised from almost nil to a sum sufficient to pay the salaries of its staff and employees. A local committee of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was set up and all over Marand party posters and slogans were displayed in Turkish.¹

Two examples can also be taken from Western Azerbaijan - its capital *Urūmiyya* (then known as *Riżā'iyya*) and *Khuy*.

Urūmiyya was an important town for the added reasons that many Kurds lived in the environs, and it was close to the Soviet border.² To combat illiteracy in *Urūmiyya*, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* set up evening classes, and established a school which catered particularly for underprivileged students, providing them with meal and clothes.³ Clubs and trade unions were also founded, and a local committee with 16,000 members.⁴ A theatre and cinema were put up, roads built, repaired, tarmac-ed, the gutters repaired, the dilapidated park was re-opened and modernised, and a bridge constructed over the rebuilt reservoir of *Nazluchai*, the water also being used for irrigation purposes in the summer.⁵

Khuy, with a population of 35,000 had reportedly received no reforms whatever during the rule of *Riżā Shāh*. Its streets went unpaved, there was no electricity-supply or drinking

1. *Dād*, 17th *Khurdād*, 1325 (7th June, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*, 781, 17th *Tīr*, 1325 (8th July, 1946).

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.* 855, 14th *Mihr*, 1325 (6th October, 1946).

5. *Ibid.* 781, 17th *Tīr*, 1325 (8th July, 1946).

water. When the National Government was established, the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt embarked on a comprehensive public works programme in the town. All streets were tarmac-ed and widened, a marsh-drainage scheme was inaugurated to regain the malaria-free conditions that had once obtained during the Soviet Occupation - one member from each family was drafted to work on the scheme; running water and electricity were also supplied. Electricity had previously been controlled by private investors who charged such extortionate prices that few could afford to take advantage of it. The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, however, nationalised it, making it generally available.

The contrast between the rule of Riżā Shāh and the nature of the National Government under the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt is sharp and of great proportions. It is commonly believed that Riżā Shāh himself refused to institute any reforms; he also failed to encourage, and even positively discouraged, private citizens from carrying any through, attempting to confiscate their wealth for himself. An example of this is shown in the case of A. Mākūyī, who effected reforms in Mākū: Mākūyī was killed on the order of Riżā Shāh who subsequently appropriated his wealth.¹

Thus it can be seen quite clearly that Riżā Shāh had no interest in towns or villages. In Julfā, for example, despite its position near the river Aras, there was a permanent water shortage; its inhabitants had to pay 300 rials for an hour's supply of water. In spite, too, of its geographical importance - Julfā lies on the Soviet border - no attempt was made to ensure its inhabitants' loyalty through a decent standard of living: no medical facilities or electricity supply existed, nor drinking water, and there was only a single school for the whole town.²

1. Personal interview with Mr. A. Pūrī, August 1982.

2. Dād, 19th Khurdād, 1325 (9th June, 1946).

Bāzargān, too, was another strategically placed town, since it was the gateway to Turkey and Europe. In the past, Bāzargān was known as the Asian trade-route, and during the Safavid period, great interest was shown in Baku and Bāzargān in respect of the defence of Iran's trade. Nevertheless, Bāzargān was neglected under Rīzā Shāh - its roads degenerated, a telegraph system was introduced only with the advent of the Soviet occupation, and the town was in general totally forgotten.¹

Salmās, with a population of c.15,000, was also reportedly neglected by Rīzā Shāh despite having suffered a severe earthquake. A good deal of relief aid was raised, yet only one tenth of the entire sum was actually spent on reconstructing the town, and rehousing its inhabitants. When the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** took over, however, they established an electricity supply system, provided drinking water, repaired and built roads, and constructed schools.

Through this brief comparison, the amount and quality of the reforms instituted by the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** is pointed up clearly. In one year, December 1945 to December 1946, the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** may be thought to have introduced more reforms than in the whole history of Iran, whatever part of the country be considered. This is particularly important to Azerbaijan, since during the **Pahlavi** period many scholars believe that Azerbaijan had consistently been neglected as a consequence of the **Azerbaijanis'** political consciousness. The following sections will deal with the main areas of reform effected by the **Firqa-yi Dimokrat** during this single year.

The National Army

The establishment of a national Azerbaijan army was a

1. Dād, 31st Khurdād, 1325 (21st June, 1946).

particularly delicate operation for the National Government to undertake. In view of the highly emotional and bitter response of the central government in Tehran to the autonomous status claimed for Azerbaijan, and both its and international media insistence that the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** headed a separatist movement whose ultimate aim was secession from Iran (and alliance with the USSR),¹ a National army might well, and would almost inevitably, be construed as a direct step in that direction: an open challenge to Tehran's authority. Nevertheless, the National Government felt the threats emanating from the central government to be sufficiently serious as to warrant the need for an **Azerbaijani** national army, to protect the rights of the province to autonomy. Prior behaviour on the part of Tehran had shown that the Central Government was not willing to uphold in any measure the Constitution, which theoretically guaranteed such rights.²

As a first step towards confirming the loyalty of Azerbaijan to Iran, and to the central government, the National Government omitted from its posts that of a separate Ministry of Defence.³ The National Army was also initially intended to be made up of volunteers. This decision was later overruled in favour of 1 year conscription for all young **Azerbaijanis** between the ages of 20-29.⁴ Pīshavarī explained this change of attitude in an article entitled: "For all, all, all", in which he took the opportunity to outline the necessity for an army and to appeal to those of conscription age to enlist in support.⁵ The bill was passed on 30th Āzar, 1324 (21st December, 1945) by the National Parliament, and as

1. Razm, supplementary no., 2nd Day, 1324 (23rd December, 1945).

2. Lockhart, "The Constitutional Laws of Persia", MEJ, vol.13, 1959, p.378.

3. Rahbar 656, 658, 27th and 29th Āzar, 1324 (18th and 20th December, 1945).

4. Ibid. 644, 11th Āzar, 1324 (2nd December, 1945).

5. Āzarbāyjān 120, 18th Bahmān, 1324 (7th February, 1946).

expected there was immediate angry condemnation of the legislation from the central government.¹ The National Parliament simultaneously elected a Supreme Council of War, which was to prepare a paper setting out the regulations for the conscripted soldiers.² The formation of the National Army of Azerbaijan was announced on January 11th, 1946³ by Kāviyān. It was a day of celebration, with students marching through the streets to the army headquarters to express their gratitude. Workers and peasants gathered at a mass meeting displaying banners covered with slogans such as: "In order to safeguard the National Government of Azerbaijan, all should join the National Army"; "At any moment, at any time, we are ready to defend Azerbaijan"; "Long live the National Government and National Army of Azerbaijan"; "Azerbaijan are proud to serve in their National Army".⁴ The Minister for Education, Bīriyā,⁵ addressed the crowd (made up of all strata of society, men and women), saying that the Azerbaijani people had been oppressed for a long time. They had only known freedom since December 12th when the National Government had been instituted. Now, in order to preserve their liberty, it was incumbent upon them to safeguard the Parliament of Azerbaijan and its province. Therefore, the National Army deserved their support; thereby, they could all demonstrate to their opponents their willingness to die rather than to give in.

Bīriyā's speech was followed by that of Pādagān.⁶ In the past, he said, conscription legislation had only been realised through police intervention and through compulsory force in dragging conscripts to the barracks. Already now, however,

1. Razm, op. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Āzarbāyjān 120, 18th Bahmān, 1324 (7th February, 1946).

4. Ibid.

5. Private notes of Bīriyā.

6. Ibid.

thousands had volunteered to join up. Pādagān stressed the fact that all democratic movements demanded personal sacrifice: today, this sacrifice could be made by joining the National Army. Kāviyān¹ concluded the meeting, thanking all present and informing them that if they desired to sign up, they should promptly go and register at Army H.Q.

More speeches were delivered at a reception held at the headquarters. Here, Pīshavarī² announced that they had done well to establish the National Army. Immediate support had been forthcoming from all strata and generations of society - even old men were anxious to join up. However, the people would have to continue giving this support in order to guarantee the success of the Army in protecting their liberties. The existence of such a force was proof to the Central government that it could not destroy the movement in one single blow (nor had it succeeded in any of its other approaches); it was to be constitutive in preserving the unity of the **Azerbaijani** people, which Tehran was trying hard to break. There were two options which could be followed, argued Pīshavarī:

- either the Tehran government allows us to enjoy independence in our education and economy, and permits us our national rights;

- or we will mobilise against the central government, march on Tehran and replace it with a democratic government.

If the Tehran government forces us to take the second option, we now assure them that because of our National Army, we are capable of carrying it through successfully. Merely when the Fida'ī entered Zanjān they caused many influential

1. Bīriyā, op. cit.

2. Āzarbāyjan 120, 18th Bahman, 1324 (7th February, 1946).

people to flee.

Much of Pīshavarī's communication from Tehran indicated that should an Azerbaijan army march, there would be a revolution in Tehran itself, in support of Azerbaijan's nationalist aims. In order to be prepared for action at any moment, the army needed ammunition, bombs, tanks and aircraft. If necessary, he warned, they would sell their basic essentials adequately to equip the army. Hardship might thus result, but would have to be endured.¹ The Bolshevik Revolution provided an example of how this was done, before finally they were freed from the yoke of Tzarist tyranny. "I am certain that the **Azerbaijani** people are equally capable of doing this", Pīshavarī said, "for in the past 5 months they have ably demonstrated their fortitude and their loyalty to the Party".

Various questions arise as to how the National Army could have formed a fighting force with such a dearth of both officers and arms. As for officers, those within Azerbaijan were supplemented with volunteers from various other sympathetic provincial forces. These were primarily mutinous elements who came to join the democratic movement. The 1st Regiment of Mashhad, for example mutinied complete with arms. The mutiny was in fact against the pressure exerted by Gen. Arfah within the Iranian Army to force its ranks to join his **Nahzat-i Millī** party, to prevent their joining the Tudeh. Those who refused to join were posted to out of the way backwaters, including Mashhad. In Mashhad, however, a group of 20, led by a Tudeh-member army officer, Iskandarī, organised a revolt, and captured a small cache of weapons, including 2 wireless vans. Before they arrived in Azerbaijan, however, via the Turkman steppe, many were killed in a clash with the

1. Āzarbāyjān 120, 18th Bahmān, 1324 (7th February, 1946).

gendarmes of Gunbad-i Qābūs.¹ The group explained the reasons for their participation in the Azerbaijan struggle in terms of the need to fight "against traitors and mercenaries",² and to "fulfil the wishes of our comrades who have been imprisoned and to serve the country and the people of Iran".³ Their motivation came primarily from a hostile attitude to Gen. Arfah, whom they wished to be replaced. When the central government realised the strength of their will, Arfah was dismissed and succeeded by Razmārā. Razmārā proved to be no more acceptable than had been Arfah, and the situation in the Army rapidly deteriorated, and it quickly became demoralised and disaffected.⁴

They were joined by contingents from Shīrāz and Ahvāz, both individuals and whole units. Another major source was a number of students from the Air Force College in Tehran. The deficiency in numbers of senior officers (the Army was commanded by Gen. Panāhiyān) was offset by the promotion of several capable Colonels to the rank of General - including Navā'ī, Nādirī, Iskandarī, Panāhiyān and Āzar, the increase of responsibility of Generals Dānishiyan and Kāyān, and the promotion of the the best captains to the rank of Colonel.

The second major step was the establishment of a Military Academy in Tabriz, under the guidance of Gen. Panāhiyān. Conditions for entry were a knowledge of Āzarī, a clean record, good health, and a minimum education of three years at high school (*sigla*). Those students with a 6 year higher education (diploma) graduated with the rank of Sutvān

1. Tulsiram, The History of the Communist Movement in Iran, Grafix, Bhopal 1981, p.98.

2. Rahbar 694, 27th Farvardīn, 1325 (16th April, 1946).

3. Īrān-i-Mā 507, 27th Farvardīn, 1325 (16th April, 1946).

4. Mihrabān, R. Gūshahā'ī Az Tārīkh-i Mu'āṣir-i Īrān, Tehran, 1982.

2, and those with only the **sigla**, that of **Sutvān** 3. Courses were initially for 3 months, although they were later extended to 6, and were very intensive. Books, clothing, food and accommodation were all provided free, and on top of this, each student received 50 **tumans** a month.¹ The core of the students came from Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, while the staff were all from Tehran, with the exception of two Soviet instructors, who taught the advanced levels, including the use of sophisticated weapons.²

A police school was also set up in Tabriz to train policemen for the whole of Azerbaijan.³

As regards weapons, the most common assumption is that they were supplied by the Soviet Union. However, unbiased and detailed analysis shows that the capture by the incipient army of all the army camps in the province, ensured that all the existing arms in Azerbaijan came into the hands of the National Government. It was not, in fact, a sophisticated force, as was discovered later by the central government. The presence of only 5 tanks and the same number of aeroplanes demonstrates the inadequacy of a theory of Soviet supplies. Three tanks came from Azerbaijan, one from Shīrāz, and one from Mashhad; the aircraft were all flown in from Tehran.⁴

The National Army of Azerbaijan was composed of around 300,000 troops. These were divided into 2 sectors:⁵ the first were **Fidā'ī** on active duty in the towns, cities and villages. The **Fidā'ī** wore no uniform and served only part-time, since

1. Rahbar 672, 23rd Isfand, 1324 (14th March, 1946).

2. Personal interview with a Colonel in the Iranian National Army, March 1982.

3. Āzarbāyjān 96, 19th Day, 1324 (9th January, 1946).

4. Their pilots were: Cols. Kāva, Rafī^cī, Riżā, Muvaddad, and Havā'ī; personal interview with retired army officers of the period.

5. Dād 778, 14th Tīr, 1325 (15th July, 1946).

they also had other jobs. They joined in manoeuvres, however, to maintain the necessary level of competence for the defence of Azerbaijan. They had originally been volunteers under the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, but when the National Government was established, those who were needed were taken on full-time and paid, while the others remained part-time. The **Fidā'ī** comprised men, women and children (i.e. both young and old), all of whom were armed as long as they were able to carry out their duties.¹ To encourage the youth towards heroic and patriotic action, they were given wooden guns to carry;² and marched, in rows of four, during manoeuvres, repeating the **Firqa** party slogan in emulation of the adults. On 17th Bahman, 1324 (10th February, 1946), the National Parliament decided to award a medal of December 3rd to commemorate the formation of the National Government to all people, either directly or indirectly involved in the **Fidā'ī**.³

The second constituted those troops who remained in barracks. These were provided with food and clothing from the Government, and were paid about 10 rials a week.⁴ This corresponded to the rate paid to the National Army of Iran.⁵

All **Azerbaijanis**, including **Pīshavarī** and members of the National Government, wore uniforms, and were armed.⁶ The Army's uniform was the same as that of the Iranian army, with the exception that **Azerbaijanis** wore on their caps a metal badge portraying a flame within a circle, and on their epaulettes a badge with a hand grenade, symbolising the age of explosion.⁷

1. Dād 778, 14th Tir, 1325 (5th July, 1946).

2. Ibid., 787, 23rd Tir, 1325 (14th July, 1946).

3. Mardum, supp. no.42, 24th Bahman, 1324 (13th February, 1946).

4. Dād, 8th Mordād, 1325 (13th July, 1946).

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 24th Tir, 1325 (15th July, 1946).

7. Ibid., 12th Tir, 1325 (3rd July, 1946).

There was, however, according to ^cAmīd Nūrī, a great difference in character underlying the respective forces. Morale was high in the Azerbaijani army, for they were united in the common goal of defending Azerbaijan. Practices and manoeuvres were held every day, but the soldier was kept in good spirits primarily through the freedom and encouragement given him: off-duty, in contradistinction to the Iranian Army, the Azerbaijani soldier could sit, read newspapers and have political discussions with his fellow soldiers. All classes were represented in the Army, yet no class conflict was apparent, for all were united in their goal of preserving Azerbaijan's integrity. In the Iranian army, on the other hand, political discussion was prohibited¹ and the composition of its soldiers created an unsettled atmosphere: most of its soldiers were peasants, who had joined up simply to escape unpopular land-owners. The popular view seems to have been that the Army did not fulfil the soldier's aspirations or wishes, cramped his freedom, and gave him no goal to work towards. This left him generally dissatisfied, with no hope and a very low morale.²

The formation of a National Army of Azerbaijan has given rise to the casting of other aspersions upon the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt. These, not surprisingly, have much to do with the charge of separatism.³ Yet, for the sake of survival, it is not at all unusual for any party or movement to require some measure of support, preferably from a major power. Discounting firstly, the claims made that it was the British who brought both the Tudeh and the Firqa to power, it is reasonable to state that the movement needed the help of one of the great powers, whether Britain, America or the USSR. Since, however, the central government was backed by the two Western powers,

1. Dād, 14th Tir, 1325 (5th July, 1946).

2. Ibid., 23rd Tir, 1325 (14th July, 1946).

3. Āzarbāyjān 212, 9th Mordād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

it was natural that the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* should turn to the Soviet Union.

While it lasted, Soviet support was primarily of a general moral nature, assistance in times of emergency - when famine threatened the province because of the central government's embargo on essential provisions, for instance - rather than direct supplies either of troops or arms.¹ As Pīshavarī said in his speech, "We did not want separation: this was the reason for our not establishing Ministries of War, or Foreign Affairs. The establishment of the National Army was for purposes of defence of our autonomy, and it was thus a totally different entity from the Iranian National Army".²

Two clear issues thus emerge here: the creation of a National Army of Azerbaijan was made possible first and foremost as a result of the loyalty and dedication of the **Azerbaijanis** as a whole to the Democratic movement, for it was through their support that its ranks were filled. As a corollary to this, the Army itself cannot be seen as set up in rivalry to the Iranian National Army. Its primary purpose was the safeguarding of those democratic rights to autonomy in the face of opposition from the central government, and not an offensive force designed to achieve the supposed aim of separation from Iran.³

The government also turned its attention to crime prevention and a general tightening of security within the province. The re-organisation of the police was based upon an existing force of mixed old and new members (in a 3:7 proportion respectively). Many people have pointed out that all officers were given education and schooling, with the chance

1. Laczowski, Russia and the West in Iran 1918-1948, Ithica, Cornell U.P. 1949, p.288.

2. Zafar 258, 15th May, 1946.

3. Āzarbāyjān 212, 9th Khurdād, 1325 (30th May, 1946).

4. Personal interview with Mr. A. Pūrī, Col. Javādiyān and Mr. Iskandarī, July, August, and September, 1982.

to attend conferences etc. This was considered to be an important step forward, for the uneducated police force had been very unpopular. The calm that prevailed was a significant factor in this achievement (which incidentally got rid of much of the bribery, too). A newspaper correspondent, impressed by a police parade, asked the superintendent, General Kāviyān, how long the recruits had been training and reported that he replied that it had been only a very short time due to their eagerness to learn.

One advantage of the reform was the reduction in the crime rate. Kāviyān announced that "every month, only three or four thieves are arrested - mainly recent arrivals in Azerbaijan, according to the files - and there is no theft during the day".¹ In reply to the correspondent's expressed reaction to the safety of the streets, he pointed out that the police were friends of the people, and refused to co-operate with thieves and brigands; the chief himself, for instance, was believed to be devoted to Azerbaijan. The falling crime rate also corresponded with the reduction in unemployment; and due to the policing activity, armed force did not need to be used against the local people.²

The same correspondent reported that the relations between prison officers and prisoners also improved, as did prison conditions. The number of prisoners dropped to 400, and at one point to 180, from a previous figure of 2,500. They had a prison library and educational facilities, so that upon release they were well-read and socially aware.³

In effect, the newly-organised police force worked solely towards its proper task of protecting persons, prisons and

1. Zafar 403, 36th Abān, 1325 (21st November, 1946).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

property.¹ Thus life in the towns, cities and villages quickly returned to normal, as government officials took over responsibility from the guerillas, and the latter were put under the command of a specific region.

The Labour Movement and Industrial Reform

A labour movement had existed in Azerbaijan since the formation of the Tudeh Party in 1941. The Tudeh had encouraged the labour movement throughout Iran,² and a Trades Union movement had been eagerly established in Azerbaijan by the local democratic elements. It had faced fierce opposition from the aristocracy of Azerbaijan, who were pro-Western and anti-Communist. This group had seen a threat to their interests in the formation of trades unions, and had joined forces with the reactionary elements in Tabriz to help the central government harass and terrorise the labour movement.³ The previous existing order was for the notables a natural one: any discontent was seen as interference by foreign agitators in the almost divinely-constituted social order that made work the appointed duty of the peasant.⁴ With the creation of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, a powerful representative voice was given to the trade unions and labour movement, so that although neither had previously had much chance to develop in Azerbaijan, they now entered upon a new era. The Tudeh in Azerbaijan, led by Pādagān, and the trade unions,

1. Interview with Kāviyān, head of Azerbaijan police force, *Zafar* 403, 36th Abān, 1325, 21st November, 1946.

2. See Chapter 3.

3. *Rahbar* 680, 9th Farvardīn, 1325 (29th March, 1946); *Zafar* 228, 20th Farvardīn, 1325 (9th April, 1946); *Rahbar* 632-634, 25th-29th Mordād, 1324 (15th-20th August, 1945), 637, 1st Shahrīvar, 1324 (23rd August, 1945).

4. S.G. Eveling, November 28th, 1944 (RG/84/2243), National Archives; cf. the analogy of the different tasks of the human fingers used by a local notable, S.G. Eveling, June 1st, 1945 (891.00/6/148) National Archives.

led by Bīriyā, at this point, declared their intention of co-operation with the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt.¹

The Azerbaijan workers were organised in 11 unions, including Clerks', Transport Workers', Weavers', and Chemical Workers' Unions, each representing a distinct section of industrial manufacture.²

The Central Council of the movement was in Tabriz, and to it were affiliated the individual unions of each factory. The Trades Union Congress maintained close ties with the Central Council of Trades Unions in Tehran,³ and through the latter, with the World Syndicate of Trades Unions.⁴

The situation obtaining in Azerbaijan was described by Pīshavarī in Āzhīr, during 1944.⁵ The Pashmīna and Pārchabāfī factories had closed, with the loss of 800 and 400 jobs respectively. Twelve year old children were earning 2 rials a day instead of attending schools (which were themselves very short-staffed); this situation was, in fact, merely the lesser of two evils, for their labour was instrumental in maintaining production. Employers, who even in Pīshavarī's eyes could not reasonably be expected to disregard their own interests, nevertheless were treating their workers merely as a commodity, paying no heed to the lower classes' plea for some sort of return at the least on the vast profits being made by the owners. By June 11th, Pīshavarī was describing Tabriz as a ruined village.⁶ The city's hospitals had been closed for six

1. Zafar 369, 14th Mahr, 1325 (6th October, 1946).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Cf. Eveling May 5, 1944, (891.00/3053), November 28, 1944 (RG/84/2243), UKG TD March 7, 1944 (F1867/138/34) PRO. Āzhīr, 21st Farvardīn, 1323 (10th April, 1944), 23rd Khurdād, 1323 (13th June, 1944).

6. Ibid.

months and only 27 primary and high schools remained open.¹ Bīriyā declared that serious action needed to be taken to combat unemployment, but only Jahānbānī was sent to listen to the complaints. When a factory meeting was called on November 18th, with Pīshavarī in attendance, Bīriyā assured the workers that the labour and trade union movement was not for 'plunderers', and no-one should thus fear either for life or property.²

The establishment of the National Government of Azerbaijan on December 12th, 1945 by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* marked a new but limited advance. The new government immediately faced financial disaster. The National Bank of Iran, in reaction to the creation of the National Government ordered a prohibition of credit and withdrawal throughout the whole of northern Iran for both private and public purposes,³ which created a money-less section in all Iran of 8 million people. Despite the general protest, exemplified by a mass transfer of capital from the National Bank of Iran to the *Shāhī* Bank, the National Government of Azerbaijan was left facing the huge problem of paying all public salaries and wages. The difficulty was resolved to a certain extent through the revival of industry and the establishment, six months ahead of Tehran, of a Ministry of Labour headed by Bīriyā,⁴ which created employment to balance the slump aggravated by the flight of worried factory owners. These measures taken by the National Government of Azerbaijan stand out in contrast with Tehran's,

1. *Āzhīr*, 21st Farvadin, 1323 (10th April, 1944), and 23rd Khurdād, 1323 (13th June, 1944).

2. U.K. Govt. Tabriz Dairy, 21st November, 1945 (9804/239/34) PRO.

3. *Rahbar* 659, 30th Āzar, 1324 (21st December, 1945); *Mardum*, special numbers 46, 29th Bahman, 1324 (18th February, 1946), 50, 7th Isfand, 1324 (26th February, 1946).

4. U.K. Govt. Tabriz Diary, 31st December, 1945 (900/900/34) PRO. Rostow, R., "The Battle of Azerbaijan", *MEJ*, vol.10, 1956, p.19.

where much talk was made about reducing unemployment which was in reality only directed towards enabling the establishment of a new Ministry of Labour to create highly-paid jobs for the upper classes.¹ Pīshavarī criticised the central government for not seeing that unemployment could be, and was successfully in Azerbaijan, reduced by reviving and creating new industry within Iran, both to provide employment and goods, and to reduce foreign imports.²

Thus the Pashmīna factory, one of the largest in Tabriz, which had shut down due to the ending of a lucrative contract to provide uniforms to the Red Army³ and the instability of the area, was re-opened and modernized. It subsequently became the largest and most efficient factory in Iran,⁴ supplying uniforms, worth 1 million rials, instead to the Fidā'ī and National Army of Azerbaijan. Its efficiency and that of industry in general in Azerbaijan was also improved as a consequence of Pīshavarī's concern for employee-welfare. This covered the equipment of factories with clubs, cafeterias, swimming-pools and sports complexes.⁵ The Pashmīna factory had a hall to fit 150 people, and facilities for films and speakers where discussion groups also met. Extensive medical care was offered, drinking-water and good, cheap food, and injured workers were treated at one of the best Soviet hospitals in Tabriz in private rooms that cost 150 rials a day. A nursery school was also attached for the use of the employees, with a special teacher who taught the rudiments of writing and reading. The children also had the use of a garden, bedrooms and a toy-room, a feature unique in Iran.⁶ It was a factory that was truly national and based upon democracy. Workers

1. Dād, 1st Murdād, 1325 (23rd July, 1946).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 30th Farvardīn, 1324 (19th April, 1946).

4. Ibid., 31st Tīr, 1324 (20th April, 1946).

5. Ibid.

6. Zafar 350, 20th Shahrīvar, 1325 (11th September, 1946).

shared in its success through a proportionate rise in wages, and its profits were spent primarily on benefits for the workers, as well as equipment for, and expansion of, the factory. Chāvushī, the man in charge, was only a simple worker, but one with a great enthusiasm. Four Soviet advisors worked in the factory for 6 months, training technical staff, including the 6 **Azerbaijani** workers who took over on the departure of the four Russians.¹

Pīshavarī also opened a stocking and nylon-cloth factory, introduced from the Soviet Union,² and installed in two houses belonging to Cols. Darakhshānī and Ilhāmī. Despite the financial problems, the employment benefit and production increase justified the one million **tumans** expenditure on the plant, plus another 400,000 on installation. The factory produced 9,000 stockings per annum, as well as underwear and jackets. Since Pīshavarī's policy was to employ female workers, the factory also included baths, a club, cafeteria, nursery and playroom. A wooden floor countered the possibility of damp in the building, there were regular medical inspectors, and the workers wore a special uniform. A notice above the entrance proclaimed: "Work in this factory is not for the lazy".³

The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** nevertheless did not oppose capitalism, for it recognised the benefits that it had brought for the development of the third world. They encouraged private enterprise,⁴ and cottage industries,⁵ and gave assistance to factory owners facing closure. Raw materials, and facilities were provided in return for material benefit to society. In this way, the formation of trade unions was a

1. Zafar 350, 20 Shahrīvar, 1325 (11th September, 1946).

2. Dād, 1st Mordād, 1325 (23rd July, 1946).

3. Zafar 319, 10th Mordād, 1325 (7th August, 1946).

4. Ibid. 356, 21st Mordād, 1325 (18th August, 1946).

5. Ibid. 267, 7th Khurdād, 1325 (28th May, 1946).

positive element for production. Nor was this confined to Azerbaijan, for the workers sympathised with other workers all over Iran. The situation of trades unions differed widely between the North and South.¹ The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* provided strong support and backing for the movement, whereas the South was heavily under the influence of the British oil companies. This created a viability gap whereby the independence of the trade unions was assured in the North, while the central government was able to crush the movement in the South through collaboration with the A.I.O.C.² The *Azerbaijanis* showed their solidarity by organising a mass meeting of 30,000 strong to condemn the action. While the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* provided medical and education facilities, together with conferences and congresses, the very existence of trades unions was illegal in the South. The Azerbaijan situation angered the A.I.O.C. and central government, and provoked their sharp reaction. The A.I.O.C. prohibited any further employment of *Azerbaijanis*, and those already employed were ordered to be fired.³

The other accomplishment of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was the promulgation of a Labour Law, passed on May 12th, 1946 six days before the National Labour Bill enacted by Qavām. This law was theoretically introduced throughout Iran, but was implemented as intended only in Azerbaijan; workers in the South complained constantly about its lack of proper

1. Michael Foot, in "Truth is in the oil-fields", says: "Although the condition of workers in the South is not perfect, it is better than elsewhere" (*Zafar* 330, 24th Mordād, 1325 [15th August, 1946]). Why Foot disregarded Azerbaijan is not clear. His article concludes that the movement begun in Iran (this refers to Azerbaijan) but prevails not only there and in the Middle East, but is also shaking most Asian countries; "we must be aware of it".

2. *Zafar* 356, 27th Khurdād, 1325 (17th June, 1946).

3. *Ibid.* 223, 15th Farvardīn, 1325 (4th April, 1946).

enforcement.¹ Its broad compass covered the recognition of trade unions, the right to strike, and the settlement of worker-employer disputes by the Ministry of Labour.² Workers' rights and conditions were promoted through a number of measures: wages were increased, enabling increased chances of financial security in conjunction with a drop in inflation and low housing costs. Evening-classes were conducted in factories, including political education. Health care was provided free of charge; industrial disputes settled by a council of three - one worker, one employer, one Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt member.³ Full pay was given on official holidays, and redundancy payments were made upon voluntary closure of a factory if the circumstances were beyond its owner's control. Annual paid holidays covered a period of between 15 days and a month depending upon the type of work. Minimum wages were to be determined in future legislation,⁴ an eight-hour working day, and forty-eight hour week were set by law, and an overtime pay rate of 50% was fixed. Illiterate workers were given permission to leave work an hour early to attend classes. A ban was also placed upon the import of goods similar to those produced within Azerbaijan, except those essential items listed by the Azerbaijan Ministry of Commerce and Economy. All government employees, for example, were to wear locally-produced clothing, although this was partly linked to an exhortation to dress well.⁵

The first Labour Congress of workers in Azerbaijan was held in Tabriz on 3rd Murdād, 1325, in the National Square.⁶

1. Zafar nos. 256, 25th Āzar, 1325 (14th April, 1946), 257, 26th Āzar, 1325 (15th April, 1946), 258, 27th Āzar, 1325 (16th April, 1946), and 259, 28th Āzar, 1325 (17th April, 1946).

2. U.K.G., Azerbaijani Labour Law 3/9/46 (E19210/950/34) PRO.

3. Zafar 369, 14th Mīhr, 1325 (23rd September, 1946).

4. U.K.G. TD August 31, 1946 (F9264/900/34) PRO.

5. Personal interview: Mr. A. Pūr-zād and Mrs. V. Naqshīna, August and September 1982.

6. Zafar 315, 5th Murdād, 1325 (27th July, 1946).

The representative of the Central Council of Trades Unions in Tehran was invited to attend and to perform the opening ceremony.¹ Azerbaijan was represented on the Central Council by Maḥzarī, who was also present at the Congress.² Louis Sayana, chairman of the World Congress of Trades Unions also attended.³ Sayana had been to Moscow for the Second Conference of the World Syndicate of the Council of Trades Unions, and from there he travelled to Iran to look over the labour organisation in the country. He arrived in Azerbaijan on 4th August to check the progress made in Azerbaijan, and to attend the Congress.⁴ In his speech, Sayana declared, "You **Azerbaijani** workers and peasants have brought democracy and freedom to Iran by your blood".⁵ Pīshavarī followed him, saying, "Azerbaijani workers, along with those throughout the world, have a responsibility to ensure that democracy prevails in Iran".⁶ Rūstā, a representative of the Central Council also spoke, saying, "300,000 workers and progressives pin their hopes of achieving democracy in Iran on you. Azerbaijan is the heart of democracy in Iran, and I am glad to see that unemployment has ended here".⁷

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*'s relations in this respect with the USSR in respect to the labour movement and trades union movement were not close. Throughout the crisis, Soviet policy was dictated by self-interest, at least as far as the Tabriz unions were concerned: partly to encourage production of supplies for the Red Army, and, towards the end of the War,

1. Zafar 369, 14th Mihr, 1325 (6th October, 1946).

2. Ibid. 379, 26th Mihr, 1325 (18th October, 1946).

3. For more details about Sayana, see Zafar 309, 30th Tir, 1325 (21st July, 1946), 310, 311, 312, 2nd Murdād, 1325 (24th July, 1946).

4. Ibid. 313, 3rd Murdād, 1325 (25th July, 1946).

5. Ibid. 315, 5th Murdād, 1325 (27th July, 1946).

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

to cause agitation within the labour unions.¹ When Eveling asked Pīshavarī why the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* had accepted Soviet aid and moral support, Pīshavarī replied that they would gladly receive aid from whomever was willing to give it, whether moral, economic or technical - just as Britain and America helped the Constitutionalists in Iran from 1905-11.² He also added that such help would have to be uncondescending and respectful of their natural and national pride, but it would be gratefully received, since the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were eager for the establishment of a modern and technically-based industry.³

The labour movement and trade unions in Azerbaijan were sponsored by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and in their hey-day enjoyed a considerable strength and influence. Through the efforts of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and its affiliated trade unions national industries were established and developed, and private enterprise was encouraged, so that on the one hand production was increased and on the other, unemployment within Azerbaijan was simultaneously cut down. The Labour Law enacted by the party did not remain merely on the statute book, but passed into active use, whereby Azerbaijan workers received health, welfare and education services, as well as personal rights and freedoms; workers' rights and those of employers were both taken into equal consideration. This movement, however, lasted a mere year, and after the defeat of the National Government in Azerbaijan under central government pressure, backed by British and American influence, the Azerbaijan Trades Union movement, along with the CCUTU (and their affiliated member, the Tudeh Party) were outlawed. All went underground in 1947. It must be recognised that

1. Lājvardī, H., Politics and Labour in Iran 1941-49, Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford, 1981, pp.264-7.

2. Dād, 26th Tir, 1325 (17th July, 1946).

3. Ibid., 27th Tir, 1325 (18th July, 1946).

despite the short-lived existence of this movement, its importance goes far beyond the extent of its life in terms of years. The freedom given to trades unions throughout Azerbaijan within this period, and its successes were gained in a very short time, was and still remains a unique experience within Iranian history.

Land Reform

Azerbaijan as a province held great agricultural potential, for it had rich soil, fertile ground, good weather, all confirming its reputation as the "bread-basket of Iran".¹ This potential was not being fulfilled, however, due to the repressive system of feudal land tenure, which while operative throughout Iran, was particularly harsh in Azerbaijan. The system, which had survived for thousands of years, established a relationship between peasants and land-owners that amounted to near slavery of the former. Many land-owners possessed vast tracts of land, and treated their peasants as cattle: Zulfaqārī for instance owned most of the district of Zanjān, an area equal to the size of Belgium, and was nick-named, 'Mr. Zanjān'. Zulfaqārī 'ruled' with a private armed force, and control over government officials, police and gendarmes. Any peasant who brought a complaint to him was as a matter of course beaten, imprisoned, or killed.² Land-owners retained absolute control over the peasants - peasants were unable either to travel freely or to marry, without the approval and permission of the landowner; they were expected to bring 'presents' constantly, eggs, milk, chickens: the landowners had no responsibility to extend aid in emergencies, whether private or collective, and levied a high rate of tax upon the

1. Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, University of Pittsburgh, 1964, p.

2. For the full scale of his misdeeds, see Mard-i Imrūz 200, Farman 501, Ufug 1, Najat-i Īrān 400, Tarqaqi 12, Ārzū 31. Progressives and trade unionists were treated similarly.

peasants.¹ If the latter were unable to pay the required sum, the only option available was migration, also without permission, so that it became a drastic operation for the peasants. Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century, many **Azerbaijani** peasants were fleeing to Baku in Soviet Azerbaijan.²

Due to this situation, when the Tudeh Party was formed in 1941, they saw the imperative of representing the peasants and workers. The Tudeh programme³ included the necessity of land redistribution and reform, to abolish the feudal system and establish the rights of these classes. Despite their good intentions, and the basic correctness of the programme, the measures taken by the Firqa were restricted in effect, partly because they were very radical, and because they were implemented with undue speed. Most importantly, however, the Tudeh policies exacerbated the conflict between peasants and landowners: their emphasis upon peasants' rights was at the expense of the landowners, whereby no solution to the problem was found, but the opposition of the two groups still more clearly defined. Thus 1945 was a year of peasant discontent, replete with rent-strikes and other disturbances.⁴

With the establishment of the National Government of Azerbaijan, the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** implemented the measures set out in the declaration of September 3rd,⁵ whereby the feudal land tenure system was abolished. Pīshavarī condemned the Tudeh policy, and declared that the Firqa would achieve a

1. Ivanov, M., Tārīkh-i Nuvīn- Īrān, n.d., pp.6-17. M. Javānshīr, Hamāsa-yi Dād, Tehran, 1980, pp.63-71.

2. Āzhīr 40-45, July 20-25, 1943.

3. See Chapter 3.

4. Ābrahāmian, Iran Between Two Revolutions, Princeton, 1982, p.397. Āzarbāyjān 2, 17th Shahrīvar, 1324 (8th September, 1945).

5. See Chapter 4.

peaceful resolution of the strained peasant-landowner relationship.¹ His resolution was subsequently approved by the National Parliament, and by the First Congress of peasants:² "All Azerbaijanis unite, and try to unite the Azerbaijani people. The conflict between peasants and landowners will be manipulated by the enemies of Azerbaijan, so you must forgive each other. Peasants should pay the landowners, who in turn must consider the peasants' conditions, and not tax them too heavily".³

A Commission of government officials was set up specifically to investigate the problem of peasant-landowner relations in September 1945.⁴ Its report was sent for approval to the Governor of Azerbaijan, but its recommendations were disregarded by many landowners, who employed gendarmes to further harass the peasants.⁵ This situation is clearly reflected in both points 11 and 12 of the programme of the National Government.⁶

The legislation concerning land distribution and reform is divided into two parts, regulating public and private land. Land redistribution was considered to be an essential element in the resolution of the conflict. Through it, peasants would receive their dignity as human beings and proper tenants, giving them freedom from the feudal landowners and a personal incentive to farm.

According to a single Article of the 16th February, 1946,⁷

1. Āzarbāyjān 2, 17th Shahrīvar, 1324 (8th September, 1945).

2. See below.

3. Āzarbāyjān 1, 14th Shahrīvar, 1324 (5th September, 1945).

4. Ibid. 22, 15th Mīhr, 1324 (7th October, 1945).

5. Ibid.

6. See Appendix C.

7. Āzarbāyjān 131, 1st Isfand, 1324 (20th February, 1946).

all public land, including that given to individuals by Muhammad Āghā Khān Qājār since 1850,¹ was to be divided amongst the peasants. This was a complementary law to that passed on 23rd Isfand,² whereby public land, their produce, and forests were distributed amongst the peasants and their families; they had only to go to their local committee and request their share. This law encouraged the realisation of agricultural potential, for negligent peasants were threatened with the removal of their land.³ Everyone with a complaint about distribution could come before a special committee to make their complaint and it would be sorted out there.⁴ The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt claimed that there was nothing unconstitutional about the division of public land amongst peasants since public land was given away by the Shāh, so that the procedure could not be illegal.⁵ Jahān Shāhlū, one of the Dimūkrāt leaders, commented that ownership was permissible for the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, but landowners who had acted cruelly in the past should be answerable to a national court, where the penalty would be decided.⁶

Where land continued in the hands of the previous owners who were Dimūkrāt supporters, there was little disagreement between peasants and landowners. This was especially the case in the border country of Azerbaijan, where land had been distributed in the Qājār period, and was already worked under the principle that owners would receive only one tenth of the profits. Thus a strong incentive existed among the peasants to protect the border - as, for example, in Shul, a village near Mākū - where the land was owned by the

1. Āzarbāyjān 174, 27th Farvadīn, 1325 (16th April, 1946).

2. Rahbar 672, 23rd Isfand, 1324 (14th March, 1946).

3. Ibid.

4. Āzarbāyjān 179, 2nd Urd, 1325 (22nd April, 1946).

5. Mardum, special no., 22nd Day, 1324 (12th January, 1946).

6. Dumyā-yi Imrūz, special edition, 3rd Day, 1324 (24th December, 1945).

Bayāt-i Mākū'ī family.¹

According to section ten of the 27th Bahman Act, all property belonging to landlords who had left Iran, and were encouraging sabotage, and those Azerbaijanis absent from the province, was confiscated by the Government. As a result, 3,000 pieces of land came into the Firqa's hands and were divided amongst peasants, including farms, orchards and wells; the land of emigrés comprised around 437 pieces.² Two days later, the Ministry of Agriculture, under Mahtāsh, stated that they would actively enforce the law, which ensured that redress could be had through the Treasury by means of a lawyer.³ If, too, landowners with only small tracts of land lost it through redistribution, they were given financial compensation in order to enable them to live.⁴

The distribution itself was effected through the agency of surveyors, who were sent through the villages and districts of Azerbaijan with a map to mark out the boundaries. This method was found to be laborious and slow, so that later, representatives were sent to each village to consult with the people as to how best to effect the division.⁵

For the implementation of the redistribution and reform, the Firqa passed a resolution consisting of 14 points. A Commission of 5, from the Ministries of Agriculture, Justice, Finance, Internal Affairs, and one from the provincial council was thereby set up to receive reports from village committees on the amount of land, and the number of peasants. It would

1. This helped to establish peace; Dād, 27th and 29th Khurdād, 1324 (17th and 19th June, 1945).

2. Āzarbāyjān 133, 5th Isfand, 1324 (24th February, 1946).

3. Rahbar 667, 17th Isfand, 1324 (8th March, 1946).

4. Āzarbāyjān 173, 26th Farvardīn, 1324 (15th April, 1946).

5. Ibid. 174, 27th Farvardīn, 1324 (16th April, 1945).

then authorise the appropriate division of land, having access to the Land Records Office and Topographical Records. It was pointed out in the resolution also, that the sale, transference or renting of property subsequent to redistribution was illegal except in the case of illness, when it could be rented under the owner's own personal supervision. All villages retained some land for public welfare - sites for schools, baths and parks etc.

In all, over a million peasants benefitted with land by the Act of 27th Bahman (16th February), dividing both public and private land.¹

The First Congress of peasants, held in Tabriz on 14th April, 1946 was the first such congress held in Iran. The aims of its 600 delegates were two-fold: to approve the laws and suggestions concerning the relations between peasants and landowners; and to raise agricultural production. The Congress was asked to present its members with a law passed by the National Government on 22nd Farvardīn.² The bill's 22 articles were concerned mainly with the rents payable to landowners: what belonged to each, what percentage, of what nature, etc. Each village was to have a council of 5, made up from local villagers to regulate and administer the troubled relationship between the two groups. If this local council found itself unable to cope with the problems, the matter would be taken before the Ministry of Agriculture, and if that body was insufficient, finally before a committee composed of members of the Ministries of Agriculture and the Interior, and of the Court.

The resolution also intended to promote the interests of

1. Āzarbāyjān 131, 1st Isfand, 1324 (20th February, 1946).

2. Ibid. 173, 26th Farvadīn, 1325 (15th April, 1946).

peasants, decreeing that, in the same instances, only one seventh of production was required to be paid to the landowners. A basic pre-tax rate of 20% was guaranteed to the peasants in order to safeguard their livelihood in case of national emergencies and such like.¹

Pīshavarī, in his opening speech, asked the delegates to become aware of the methods of land distribution which the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were employing. Having expounded upon the background of the conditions of the villages and gendarmerie etc., he urged the peasants to unite, safeguarding their aims, and to try to participate in political affairs. By so doing, they could become a powerful force, instrumental in preventing a return to the control of the central government.

Pīshavarī advised the peasants further to widen their crop choices: it was to their advantage not to concentrate totally upon wheat, the basic bread staple, but to also plant the more profitable crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar-beet. He warned also of the disadvantages of using primitive machinery and methods. In conjunction with this, he recommended that the National Government should create a Bank of Agriculture,² which would buy the necessary modern equipment and machinery and sell it to the peasants on an instalment plan. The Bank should also extend loans in times of emergency, with no interest rate and repayment schedule, enabling the peasants to cope during periods of drought, famine or floods and so forth.

In his closing speech, Pīshavarī gave high praise to the peasants, declaring that they were the saviours of the National Government since they had taken up arms and defended

1. *Āzarbāyjan* 173, 26th Farvardīn, 1325 (15th April, 1946).

2. *Ibid.* 176, 29th Farvardīn, 1324 (18th April, 1945).

Azerbaijan. The National Government thus intended to make theirs the first priority in society.¹ Unlike the central government, which had made difficulties for Azerbaijan, there would be no discrimination within the land distribution; this applied also to nomads, who would be given lands and thus encouraged to settle their differences similarly to the peasants.²

This programme of land distribution and reform was unique throughout the Middle East. Twenty years later when Muḥammad Riżā Shāh introduced a land reform, it was nowhere near as comprehensive as that of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, for only this, for instance included legislation concerning nomads, and Muḥammad Riżā Shāh's measures, despite promising freedom of pasture, did not in fact allow peasants to have equal use of it with landowners.³ Pīshavarī declared that Iranian peasants had both the right and the will to divide land amongst themselves. If the Iranian government wished to emulate this, it must take comparable steps throughout Iran.⁴

Thus, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*'s measures succeeded in freeing millions of peasants from slavery under the landowners and from the feudal system, affording them for the first time a dignity in their relationship with the landowners consonant with their stature as human beings.

Judicial Reform

Judicial proceedings before December 12th in Azerbaijan,

1. *Āzarbāyjān* 176, 29th Farvadīn, 1324 (18th April, 1945).

2. *Ibid.*

3. For other comparisons, see details in Muḥammad Riżā Shāh's *Inqilāb-i Safīd*, Tehran, 1964, *passim*.

4. *Zafar* 286, 30th Khurdād, 1325 (20th June, 1946).

as in many other provinces, were voluminous, and little of it was ever adequately dealt with. This was partly due to an insufficient number of lawyers, but many cases were also brought far too late, and bribery flourished at all levels throughout the judiciary.

As a consequence of the measures adopted after the formation of the National Government,¹ there was so little litigation that the legal atmosphere, according to Dād, resembled that of the Swiss Courts.² The first act of the National Government was an 'amnesty' on all pending cases excluding serious crimes - murder, rape or theft etc. This effectively reduced the bulk of court-business by 80%. Following upon this came an act that shortened the criminal procedure, and also incorporated the summary trial of criminals on a month's trial period, which was subsequently extended to 3 months.³ In addition, various other reforms, including, for example, insistence upon the presence of the accused at his trial, were introduced. The crimes against persons and property which remained in force became subject to very stiff penalties, including capital punishment, a deterrent that very effectively reduced the crime rate and increased civilian security. This rather inhuman solution seemed necessary at the time. Thus thefts, embezzlement, bribery and sexual harassment seemed to fall drastically in number.⁴ Two Fidā'ī who had stolen arms, and two civilian thieves were executed under this act, for example, and many thieves avoided punishment by the surreptitious return of stolen goods, even from long-forgotten crimes; a clerk was also executed for accepting a bribe of 500 tumans.⁵ The effect upon the level of

1. Dād, 16th Khurdād, 1324 (6th June, 1945).

2. Ibid.

3. Razm, supp. no., 2nd Day, 1324 (23rd December, 1945).

4. Dād, 16th Khurdād, 1324 (16th June, 1945).

5. Ibid.

litigation brought about by these unprecedented legal reforms, was the increased time available to the courts for concentrated attention to be given to serious crimes.

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* paid considerable attention not only to adult crime but also to juvenile delinquency. A law was passed¹ whereby children below the age of 13 were not held responsible for their misdemeanours, but still warnings and advice were given to their parents, telling them to watch closely their childrens' behaviour. Those between 13-18 who were convicted, were sent to approved schools, where, however, educational and sporting facilities were an integral feature, and everything was done to rehabilitate and reform, although a special institution for teaching purposes was also created.

The land reform programme² introduced by the National Government also affected the activity of the judiciary, since it minimised disagreements between peasants and landowners, being dealt with either by a tribunal of peasants, or by a local committee of *Firqa-yi Dimukrat* members. Industrial disputes between workers and employers were similarly resolved by a council of workers.³

On 10th March, 1946, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* enacted a bill with 5 articles, one of which regulated the use of drugs and their peddling.⁴ Drugs such as hashish, heroin and opium were prohibited, and the third⁵ article also prohibited the smuggling of such drugs into Azerbaijan, punishable rather severely, perhaps, by death. By doing this, drug use was drastically reduced. Addicts were advised to go to special

1. Rahbar 672, 23rd Isfand, 1324 (14th March, 1946).

2. Dād, 16th Khurdād, 1324 (6th June, 1945).

3. Ibid.

4. Rahbar 672, 23rd Isfand, 1324 (14th March, 1946).

5. Ibid.

doctors working in certain places, through whom they could obtain prescriptions.¹ On the same day, a law forbidding all forms of torture in Azerbaijan was passed, since the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* disagreed with such measures to help reform anybody, since they would be far more likely to harden the criminal and increase his resentment and resistance.² This exemplifies the short-term and rather hurriedly enforced penal code, which by its nature and severity differed considerably from the Iranian Law. Of course, the short-lived existence of the Azerbaijani Government precludes long-term comparison.

Pīshavarī himself held a stern and severe attitude towards criminal behaviour, for he believed that a falling crime-rate could guarantee the improvement of society.³ It is thus interesting that few appeals against sentence were ever granted: the two *Fidā'ī* above failed in their appeal to Pīshavarī for clemency, despite the serious need for *Fidā'ī* members.⁴

With such judicial reforms, which were unique to Azerbaijan, and unique also within Iranian history, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* made a real mark upon democratic progress in the judicial system. They simultaneously affected reform within the procedure itself, bringing tangible and psychological improvement, and a reduction in the actual rate of crime in Azerbaijan. Their serious and stern attitude achieved much success, and this success within the court system is most noteworthy and laudable.

1. *Rahbar* 672, 23rd Isfand, 1324 (14th March, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Dād*, 17th Khurdād, 1324 (7th June, 1945).

4. *Ibid.*

Tax and Financial Reform

The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** were faced with three initial economic problems upon the establishment of the National Government. The Government was faced with an immediate financial crisis, for soon after the declaration of September 3rd, the **Firqa-yi Dimokrat** had acquired a Communist image amongst the wealthy class in Azerbaijan. This group thus began to take their money out of Azerbaijan, encouraged by the central government.¹ Tehran was anxious to force the National Government into collapse, and further created economic difficulties and disorder within the province through urging the National Bank of Iran to forbid its provincial branches in the North to pay out money, especially in Azerbaijan.² The National Government, in retaliation, prohibited the sale of **Azerbaijani**-produced goods outside the province.³ The shortage of money thus created was compounded by the paucity of tax revenues brought in for the National Government. This circumstance reflected the difficulties in raising taxes traditionally experienced in Azerbaijan. In the past, tax revenues had rarely been spent according to their true purpose, to benefit the people; nor had it been distributed fairly, the wealthy being able to bribe the tax officials and leaving the poor doubly unfortunate, at the mercy of unethical and ruthless officials who demanded from them enough tax to cover the share of the rich.⁴ There was thus great reluctance amongst **Azerbaijanis** to pay tax revenues.

The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** were not discouraged, however,

1. Pīshavarī, *op. cit.*, p.13.

2. *Mardum*, spec. nos 46, 29th Bahman, 1324 (18th February, 1946), 50, 7th Isfand, 1324 (26th February, 1946); *Rahbar* 659, 30th Āzar, 1324 (2nd December, 1945).

3. *Rahbar* 647, 14th Āzar, 1324 (5th December, 1945), 650, 18th Āzar, 1324 (9th December, 1945).

4. *Āzarbayjān* 112, 9th Bahman, 1324 (29th January, 1946).

by this unhealthy situation. Such interference from Tehran had been anticipated, and the **Firqa** focused their efforts first of all upon resolving these economic problems, for they recognised the importance of economic stability as a prerequisite for the institution of any reforms.¹

The first step taken to alleviate the financial crisis was the issuing of Government bonds. Bonds had previously been introduced in Tehran through the Millspaugh Mission; they had failed dismally because of general and widespread distrust of their security, in view of the nature of the central government. Pīshavarī, however, adopted the same system, and its success in Azerbaijan underscores sharply the trust placed by **Azerbaijanis** put in the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** and National Government.²

A second step took the form of public tax education. Through the media and a series of conferences and public meetings, the nature, purpose and importance of the tax system was disseminated through Azerbaijan society. Representatives of the various classes were invited to such meetings to learn the benefits of taxes, and their necessity for the government's public works and welfare programme.³ A short, intensive course was also set up, to train trusted people for tax propaganda activity, explaining the workings of the system and its advantages to villagers and townspeople across the province, and courteously requesting payment.⁴ Pīshavarī himself, stated at a big public meeting: "If we do not receive enough taxes from you, the people, we shall not be able to build schools, universities, hospitals or factories. In the past, tax revenues

1. Āzarbāyjān, 101, 24th Day, 1325 (14th January, 1947).

2. Dād, 2nd Mīhr, 1325 (24th September, 1946).

3. Āzarbāyjān 112, 9th Bahman, 1324 (29th January, 1946).

4. Ibid.

were indeed misappropriated. We promise, however, that the money which you give to us will be properly spent upon the welfare and benefit of Azerbaijan society".¹ Concluding his speech, Pīshavarī declared that everyone present should be a good propagandist for the tax system amongst the population.²

Through this widespread propaganda for the tax system, together with its manifestly well-spent revenues, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were able to develop the economic life of Azerbaijan, simultaneously establishing trust among the people and gaining the required income. The tax system introduced in Azerbaijan by the National Government was in fact copied from that instituted in Iran by Millspaugh, so that tax regulations were the same both in Tehran and Tabriz. Pīshavarī's attack on the Millspaugh Mission through *Āzhīr*,³ although mistakenly taken as such, was not a denigration of the tax system itself, but rather, on the unlimited authority given to the Mission by the central government in Tehran. In one article, Pīshavarī said: "We are friendly with America, and we want economic ties with her. This does not mean, however, that we have to give boundless power to one American. Any power, of any kind, should be limited: we have to have economic freedom, in a free country".⁴ Millspaugh's tax system was adopted by the National Government, indeed, and had a high degree of success.

The economic situation of Azerbaijan was further complicated by the complex attitude taken by the National Government towards foreign trade. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* initially did not favour foreign trade because it might lay

1. *Āzarbāyjān* 112, 9th Bahman, 1324 (29th January, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*

3. Cf. *Āzhīr* nos 159-162, 30th Khurdād, 1st Tīr, 4th Tīr and 6th Tīr, 1323 (20th, 22nd, 25th and 27th June, 1944).

4. *Ibid.* 161, 4th Tīr, 1323 (25th June, 1944).

them open to the familiar charge of being a separatist movement. They later came to the conclusion that outside trade was a requisite partly for the import of certain essential goods and also to appease **Azerbaijani** merchants who were anxious to expand their trade abroad.¹ It was a sensible and profitable change of heart, for they managed to sell much of the goods produced by Azerbaijan and gained foreign currency and income in addition.²

Although the National Government had to overcome a financial and economic crisis immediately upon its establishment, a situation compounded by the antipathy of the central government, it was able within a very short time to create a stable economic foundation in Azerbaijan. The budget of the town councils was raised from nothing to an adequate sum, inflation was reduced by 40%,³ foreign trade was opened up, factories built and production increased, and many economic reforms, mentioned above, were instituted. The Azerbaijan economy became so strong that 11 rials in the rest of Iran were the equivalent of 10 rials in Azerbaijan. All of these achievements were made primarily as a consequence of the close and mutual relationship of trust between the people of Azerbaijan and the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**.

Education

The need for widespread and good education in Azerbaijan was taken very seriously by the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**. The rate of illiteracy in the province was extremely high, and the party's leaders recognised that in order to retain the gains which they had made and to consolidate upon them, educated

1. Pīshavarī, op. cit., p.13.

2. Ibid.

3. Rahbar 647, 14th Āzar, 1324 (5th December, 1945).

people were required to fulfil the posts and tasks involved.¹ Communication in all areas depended greatly upon education: the media was an important tool of educating the masses politically, and reading material would instil certain principles within them, as well as stimulate and broaden their minds; in this way they might become more aware and active in political affairs. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*'s insistence upon *Azerbaijanis* being in control of their own future and government, demanded educated people. The danger in requesting outside help through an inner inability to hold one's own, lay in control eventually being taken again from their own hands.²

There was, however, a shortage of both schools and qualified teachers; many already teaching were incompetent, and the education system itself badly needed reforming.³ The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* immediately mobilised their members and supporters to remedy a situation in which only four schools could be boasted of in Tabriz in 1936, for example.⁴ The party managed within a year to establish 500 public schools in many night schools - attached to factories, clubs, etc. - over Azerbaijan; through these, almost 300,000 *Azerbaijanis* were educated.

It was proposed to solve the shortage of teachers by opening a faculty of education within the University of Tabriz.⁵

The essential problem inherent in the established system of education in Azerbaijan rested upon the use of Persian as the language of instruction. Upon beginning school, children

1. *Imbīr-i Āzar Nuṭqlar va Maqālalar*, S.J. Pīshavarī, Tabriz, 1980, pp.13-14.

2. *Āzarbāyjān* 124, 23rd Bahman, 1325 (12th February, 1947).

3. *Rahbar* 658, 29th Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

4. *Ibid.* 661, 10th Isfand, 1324 (1st March, 1946).

5. *Āzarbāyjān* 96, 19th Day, 1324 (9th January, 1946).

were immediately faced with learning in a language with which they were unfamiliar, since it was not their mother tongue, and was not spoken at home.¹ The eighth article of the *Firqa's* programme, concerning national education therefore stated that *Āzari*-Turkish was to be introduced immediately into all schools as the official language.²

Language was an integral part of the **Azerbaijani** national identity, and a matter of both pride and obstinacy. These two attitudes resulted in large part from the suppression of **Azerbaijanis** as a national group by the central government through long years, matched by the even more ancient national pride fostered by the people of Azerbaijan. Thus few **Azerbaijanis** were willing to use any other language, even if living outside Azerbaijan itself, for with it went also their national culture.³ The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* directed their attention and activity towards freeing *Āzari*-Turkish from the inferior status accorded it by the central government. It was to be restored to a position of pride and legitimacy throughout Azerbaijan in all sectors of life.⁴ Thus *Pīshavarī* put his efforts into making *Āzari*-Turkish the language also of education. It was, he claimed a complete language, distinct from any other, and it was spoken by the majority of the population who did not speak Persian. *Riżā Shāh* had attempted to remove all Turkish-speaking teachers and replace them with teachers who were ignorant of it to prevent communication in *Āzari* between staff and students in the schools. Thereby, the children would be forced to learn and to speak Persian. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* opposed this policy fiercely. *Pīshavarī* argued that despite the need to know Persian in order to communicate with people outside Azerbaijan there was no

1. Personal interview with A. *Pūrzād*, September, 1982.

2. Appendix.

3. *Āzarbāyjān* 109, 4th Bahman, 1324 (24th January, 1946).

4. *Ibid.* 124, 23rd Bahman, 1324 (12th February, 1946).

reason to prevent nations from promoting their own mother tongue. To forbid a nation from speaking its own language is to stunt its cultural development. This was recognised by the United Nations, and is incorporated into the International Law of Human Rights of 1929, which states in article 3 that: "Every government has a duty to insure the rights of all nations to use or educate their people in any language which they choose".¹

The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt also attacked Riżā Shāh's policy of the 'Persianisation' of Azerbaijan through the enforced use of Persian in the area of the media. They declared that such a programme could be merely counter-productive and increase the tension with Azerbaijan. National papers, printed in Persian in actual fact had a very limited circulation in Azerbaijan since few were eager to read in Persian. Even when Persian papers were published in Azerbaijan itself - Khāvar-i Naw, Sitāra-yi Āzarbāyjān in Tabriz, for example - their circulation reached only 500. With the establishment of the National Government and the subsequent publication of Āzarbāyjān and Banī Sharq, the circulation of these rose to 5,000.² Thus, banning publication of books and papers in Āzarī-Turkish in order to enforce the learning of Persian would not have any effect. This circumstance is reflected also in the theatre, where before Riżā Shāh, Āzarī-Turkish had been spoken. Riżā Shāh's prohibition of the use of Turkish merely resulted in a cessation of people attending the theatres.³

Education in itself was recognised as of vital importance also, with regard to the autonomy and consolidation of Azerbaijan. Here again, the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt were faced with a problem in the shortage of educated people to fill the top

1. Zafar, 20th Urdībihisht, 1325 (10th May, 1946).

2. Ibid. 370, 15th Mīhr, 1325 (7th October, 1946).

3. Āzarbāyjān 12,

posts and lower echelons of the government process. The older men suffered from two disadvantages: having grown accustomed to corruption, sanctioned by the ruling authority, they found it very difficult to get out of such ingrained habits, even though most were willing to do so; simultaneously, their methods and ideas were out-of-date and inappropriate for the new situation. The need to educate people to take their place was therefore a primary requisite. Similarly, there existed an educated group who yet lacked the proper training and who were thus also not capable of fulfilling the new jobs. The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** promptly embarked upon a programme to train people according to the needs of society.

The Ministry of Education prepared an outline of a new, improved education system to replace the old inadequate one.

The old system suffered from three major defects. Most of the provincial schools were staffed with under- or non-qualified teachers, since the only university in Iran, before the establishment of the University of Tabriz, was that of Tehran. With a strictly limited intake in proportion to the number of applicants, most teachers did not receive any training, and their knowledge was restricted to 6 years of primary school, or at most, 3 years higher school. Furthermore, teachers' salaries were so low that they were forced either to bribery or to supplement their income through other means, with the net result that few were devoted to their task. Finally, the actual method of education was non-productive. Students were expected only to exhibit powers of memory and rote-learning, and were not taught to inquire analytically or to use their own minds, a process which far from stimulating their intellectual curiosity effectively suppressed it.¹

An example of this situation, representative of that

1. Rahbar 658, 29th Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

throughout Iran, can be seen in Zanjan. The size of Belgium, with a population of 500,000,¹ Zanjan district was equipped with only 20 schools, not all of these, even, operative, and two high schools, for boys and girls. The buildings were unsuitable and in bad condition - in an investigation carried out by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* of a class, only two students out of a total of twenty-two were healthy.² A similar survey of teachers revealed that their knowledge of grammar, spelling and mathematics was extremely rudimentary.³ Following the establishment of the National Government, Mr. Navā'ī was appointed Zanjan's educational director. In an interview with *Rahbar*, Navā'ī stated that the deficiency of the existing education system was recognised but since term had already started, it was not possible for reform to be instituted immediately. Thus, the same books were continuing to be used, but weekly meetings of staff and students were held to remind the teachers not to demand unthinking rote-learning that suppressed individual contributions, but to teach students to ask questions and analyse the material which they were raising. The books should eventually be replaced, since their contents dealt almost exclusively with the Shāhs; and this was neither right nor healthy: they should discuss literature and poetry, and the other national heroes of the country. Thus, too, their feeling that the frontispiece pictures of the Shāh, who was then no more than a figure-head and should not be made so much of in text books of history, should be removed and replaced with others, such as Shaykh Muḥammad Khīyabānī; no other democratic countries printed the King's picture at the front of their text-books. New schools should be built on emigre lands, in spacious and hygienic conditions, and teachers should make regular health checks on the students.*

1. *Rahbar* 658, 29th Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

2. *Ibid.*; personal interview with Mr. Pūrzād, September 1982.

3. For more details, see *Rahbar* 658, 29th Āzar, 1324 (20th December, 1945).

4. *Ibid.*

In a speech in the education college, Pīshavarī declared that "the world is based on science and education. If we want to keep up with the progressive countries, we shall have to keep up with the advance of education and science". He therefore strongly urged teachers to take their jobs seriously, learning to teach their students the right of freedom, and patriotism.¹ Allied with this concern, and in its practical application, Pīshavarī was instrumental in establishing the University of Tabriz. The University was opened with three faculties: medicine, agriculture and education.² In Pīshavarī's speech at the opening of the University, he declared: "We are not opening a University for the sake of the name. We are opening it because there is a desperate need for doctors, for agricultural experts, and for teachers whom we hope to employ in order to fill the present shortage".³ Thus the Faculty of Education was seen as a vital constituent element since they needed to train good teachers first who would then teach the students.⁴ Pīshavarī finally urged the prospective students of the University of Tabriz to take their studies seriously; he himself would be attached to its teaching staff as a lecturer.⁵

The University of Tabriz became influential throughout Azerbaijan, educating to a high standard many teachers. After the fall of the National Government, Tehran tried very forcefully to close the University down. This move was fiercely resisted in Azerbaijan, however, and the central government found itself unable to implement its decision. It was therefore forced to compromise the policy through the prohibition of **Azerbaijanis** as directors of the University, but sent men from

1. Āzarbāyjān 124, 23rd Bahman, 1324 (12th February, 1946).

2. Ibid. 96, 19th Dāy, 1324 (9th January, 1946).

3. Pīshavarī, op. cit., pp.11-14.

4. Ibid., p.14.

5. Ibid.

Tehran, such as Dr. Dīqhān, succeeded by Dr. S. Amīn.¹ Whatever the later events, the University was only the second established in the whole of Iran, and its creation and achievements were due to the efforts made tirelessly by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*.

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* introduced free compulsory primary schooling, and encouraged high school education through films and conferences. Education colleges were opened to complement the University of Tabriz. In the one year, the National Government also brought down considerably the rate of illiteracy. According to interviewees,² if they had continued in power, they would have introduced a modern system, using their mother tongue and the best educational methods comparable to all advanced countries, which would have been unique in the Middle East, providing the best doctors, scientists, teachers and professors to advise the rest of Iran. With their collapse, however, the hopes of Azerbaijanis vanished, and even now, 38 years later, there remains a 75% illiteracy rate in Iran. Neither before nor since has Iran possessed a government which has taken education or the educational system so seriously, and it still waits in hope for such a development.

Health

The standard of health care throughout Azerbaijan - medical facilities, the number of doctors per patient, the level of treatment, hygiene, etc. - was extremely low, as in a number of other areas where the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* introduced reforms. Malnutrition existed in both towns and villages, exposing the people to a host of diseases, and making them

1. Personal interview with Col. Sharīfī, March 1982.

2. Personal interviews with A. Pūrẓād, Col. Sharīfī, Dr. Jāvīd (Minister of Education of Azerbaijan), August and September 1982.

vulnerable to the simplest and least harmful to the point of death. Facilities were available only in the large towns, meaning that those sick in the countryside or small villages were forced to travel, increasing the likelihood of death before they could receive treatment. The infant mortality rate was high, due to a lack of midwives, especially in the villages, and vaccination facilities, while many fell victim to the prevalent trachoma that, without treatment, led to blindness. Hygiene was almost non-existent, since villagers did not know of the benefits of soap or baths, the necessity of washing food before eating it, or of washing their hands before meals, etc. Thus the mortality rate in general was very high, and reforms were urgently needed.¹

The dire situation of health care was recognised by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* when they came to power, and they set about ameliorating conditions throughout Azerbaijan. It was a difficult task, due to the absence of doctors, nurses and hospitals. Therefore, requests were made of medical personnel in the rest of Iran for support and help; some came, but far under the number required.² A second step was the establishment of training programmes: 3 months duration for nurses and midwives, and 6 months for doctors' assistants;³ Iranian and Soviet doctors were employed to run these courses.⁴ Hospitals were built as quickly as possible in the towns, using confiscated and abandoned land as sites. A Russian hospital, for example, was set up in Tabriz to give treatment to the seriously ill.⁵ These measures, while good and necessary, were still confined to towns and cities, for it required far more effort, resources and time than the *Firqa-yi*

1. Eveling, S.G., 5th May, 1944 (891.00/3055) National Archives.

2. Personal interview with Dr. Jāvīd, August 1982.

3. Personal interview, Pūrẓād, September 1982.

4. Personal interview, Col. Sharīfī, March 1982.

5. Personal interview, Mr. Iskandarī, August 1982.

Dimūkrāt possessed, to provide a near adequate province-wide health service immediately. The problem of the countryside was temporarily resolved through the employment of mobile clinics for the villages, each equipped with 1 doctor, two assistants, two midwives, 3 nurses and one vaccinating official.¹ These clinics carried soap, dried milk, vitamin pills and gave regular checks to the villagers. The emphasis was laid upon self-help and health education, but those with severe illnesses or diseases were hospitalised wherever possible. The long-term programme, however, envisioned the establishment of hospitals through the countryside and villages - but mobile clinics were depended upon as a temporary stop-gap measure.

Health education was given by means of films showing methods and standards of hygiene, instructing the populace on the need for cleanliness, nutritious food, vaccinations etc.² Soap was produced and sold at very low prices to encourage and enable the people to use it.³ A regulation was instituted whereby one afternoon a week was set aside for factory workers to bathe, shave, and engage in sports - the carpet factories, for example, went to the public baths on Mondays.⁴

By doing this, the National Government dramatically improved health standards throughout Azerbaijan. 50 big hospitals, with 700 beds were set up across the province and thousands of mobile clinics sent out.⁵ In order to overcome the shortage of drugs and tablets, medicines were imported from neighbouring countries; later, they trained chemists to make up their own drugs.⁶ With the opening of the University of

1. W. Doubless, A Strange Land and Kind People, New York, 1951, pp.43, 44.

2. Personal interview, Dr. Sabri Tabrizi, 1983.

3. Personal interview, Col. Iskandarī, August 1982.

4. Personal interview, Dr. Sabri Tabrizi, 1983.

5. Sitāra 363, 4th Mihr, 1324 (26th September, 1945).

6. Personal interview, Pūrżād, September 1982.

Tabriz, the **Firqa** hoped to train doctors for the future. Nevertheless, they were still able to bring down the mortality rate considerably even within one year, but unfortunately, fate did not give them enough time to fulfil their programme as intended. However, free national health throughout Azerbaijan was provided, and the measures and methods introduced in Azerbaijan were unique in Iran, possibly even in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Azerbaijan was a province rich in potential, for it possessed fertile soil, mineral wealth, plentiful resources, and a people eager for the potential to be fulfilled. Azerbaijan was further important geographically and strategically, situated on a good trade route between the Middle East and Europe. In its recent history, this development had been seriously retarded through the policies of **Rizā Shāh**, yet the **Azerbaijanis** national identity and pride had not been suppressed, and the province was ripe for a government which would seize the potential offered and draw it out to its fullest possibilities.¹

The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** formed just such a National Government, governed by democratic principles and fired with a desire for national renewal in the face of violent opposition from the central government in Tehran. It was strong-willed to withstand this pressure and inwardly motivated to effect reforms within Azerbaijan, to improve the province.

The **Firqa** was able to provide both a sense of dignity to **Azerbaijanis** and the physical environment in which this life could be lived at its fullest. All **Azerbaijanis** became equal

1. Rahbar 660, 661, 9th and 10th Isfand, 1324 (28th February and 1st March, 1946).

before the law, and thereby women too were given, for the first time in Iranian history, the right to vote, stand for the **Majlis**, or even become Ministers. Azerbaijan society was purified of a high rate of crime which had made the streets unsafe, theft and burglary rampant, and the populace frightened and insecure. A foreign observer announced to Pīshavarī: "I was in the villages interviewing before your declaration of September 30th, and people then had a slave mentality. After the formation of the National Government, I again interviewed many in the same places, and now the peasants have become so full of pride".²

The achievements of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** were noted in several unprejudiced sources. According to W. Douglas,³ the **Firqa** during a single year effected many reforms unknown throughout Iran. The land reform instituted uniquely considered the mutual relationship of peasants and landowners, bribery and corruption were eliminated to a large extent, shopkeepers felt safe to leave their shops open, cars could be left unlocked, mobile clinics toured the villages, free compulsory education was introduced, there was practical application of the Labour Law, and all in all a general public works programme mobilised through the support of the people.

The American Consul in Tabriz noted that the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** effected in one year more reforms than all those carried out in Iran before.⁴ Many new roads and railway lines were constructed, hostels for the destitute were built to take them off the streets, financial help was extended to prostitutes so that they would have no further need to practice

1. Āzarbāyjān 124, 23rd Bahman, 1324 (12th February, 1946).

2. Ibid.

3. W. Douglas, op. cit., p.43-4.

4. Elwell-Sutton, 30th December, 1946 (891.00/3046) National Archives.

their profession, while others left Azerbaijan; institutions to aid women and children were established, as well as Radio Tabriz, and the University, and Azerbaijan became so safe that people were free and unafraid to walk alone by night.¹

These reports are corroborated by the accounts given by non-sympathetic observers. When ^cAmīd Nūrī,² the editor of *Dād*, together with three other representatives of the central government were sent by Qavām to Azerbaijan to confirm the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops after May 9th, 1946, ^cAmīd Nūrī was unable to hide or conceal his amazement at the reforms introduced by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* all over Azerbaijan. Upon his return to Tehran, he devoted space in *Dād* for one month, 29th May to 30th June, to articles about Azerbaijan.

Thus the only real disappointment was the single year permitted to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, during which only a limited form of progress could be made, and nowhere near the full programme set out by the party be carried through, to the great disadvantage of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people.

1. Cf. *Īrān-i Mā*, 8th Abān, 1326 (30th October, 1947).

2. *Dād*, 8th Khurdād, 1325 (29th May, 1946).

CHAPTER 6

THE FALL OF THE FIRQA-YI DIMŪKRĀT

It is obvious that discussion of the failure of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān* must be set in the context of foreign intervention within Iran, for the presence of Russia and Britain was a major factor, if not the principal one, in Iranian politics from the beginning of the twentieth century.¹ Despite this situation, insufficient work has been done to establish either the extent or nature of internal circumstances, in Iran and more particularly, within Azerbaijan. This being so, we shall concentrate in this chapter upon internal events and influences concerning the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān*, mentioning outside causes only where absolutely necessary, and ask the reader to go to the innumerable books already published for detailed analysis of this part of our subject.²

Azerbaijan was, at the end of WWII, spring 1945, a bone of contention that thereby forced upon itself the attention of foreign powers and of Tehran, and suffered accordingly. America, Britain and the Soviet Union were faced at the end of the war with a major problem in Iran, as a consequence of the presence of both Soviet and British occupation forces in the country. Disagreement over withdrawal of these became sharp, and it was this conflict over Iran that marked the beginning of the Cold War that ensued after 1945.³

1. Cf. D'Arcy oil concession, 1901.

2. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy, 1941-73*, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1975; Partin, M.W., *US-Iranian Relations 1945-7*, North Texas State University, 1977; Tabari, K., *Iran's Policies towards the United States During the Anglo-Russian Occupation 1941-1946*, Columbia University, 1967; Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Middle East*, Princeton, 1980.

3. Partin, *op. cit.*, p.55.

These difficulties were compounded by the relationships that had evolved between the foreign powers and the various factions in Iran, and their mutual antagonism. The central government was traditionally pro-West, and accorded with the latter's desire to see the Azerbaijan democratic movement crushed.¹ The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, however, resisted both the central government and the presence of foreign powers in Iran, but was supported (not as a puppet) by the USSR.

Iranian attitudes towards the presence of outside powers in the country were more complex than simple approval or disapproval. While the central government was pro-West, it still wished for the removal of all foreign troops, particularly so as to be able to crush the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān* as part of the attempt to re-establish their power in both Tehran and the provinces.²

The Majlis, on the other hand, was split over the propriety of a foreign presence, primarily Soviet. The Conservatives within parliament argued for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops in order to let Tehran regain its governmental stature. The minority Communists, backed by liberals, believed that as long as the Soviets retained their presence in Azerbaijan, the central government might see their way to at least a limited number of much-needed reforms; if the USSR withdrew, it was almost certain that these reforms would remain uninstituted, since the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* would then not be given a chance to establish itself.³

This latter situation did in fact obtain: Soviet troops withdrew on March 2nd, 1946, and the central government,

1. Tulsiram, The History of the Communist Movement in Iran, Bhopal (n.d.), p.105.

2. Partin, op. cit., p.55.

3. Eveling to Sec. of State Bevin, October 13th, 1945.

backed by the West, succeeded in suppressing the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, preventing the democratic movement from spreading through Iran, and throughout the Middle East, the fear of the West.¹

In the spring of 1945, Azerbaijan was not an international problem among the ranks of the Big Powers; it was more seriously an internal issue facing the Iranian government's foreign relations. The discussion of Iran at Yalta in February 1945² was delegated by Churchill, with the agreement of Stalin and Roosevelt, to their respective foreign ministers, who were felt to be capable of dealing with the issue.³ It was therefore not considered by the leaders to be a major area of conflict. Nevertheless, events soon escalated within Iran that drew the Powers into hostility.

The first disturbances occurred with a rebellion of tribesmen in *Riẓā'iyya* during February/March 1945. *Riẓā'iyya* was in the Soviet zone, and the central government requested permission from the Soviet Union to send troops to crush the rebellion. The Soviets agreed to one battalion from Tabriz, but Tehran insisted that a regiment was necessary, and dispatched one from Saqqiz. This was halted on the border of the Soviet zone,⁴ an act which angered Tehran, and worried the West since it was in violation of Article 4 of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942, which stated that: "The Soviet authorities cannot prohibit the entry of Iranian troops into the Soviet zone for internal administrative purposes".⁵

1. Kumaramangalam, M., Iran at the Crossroads, Bombay, 1946, Ch.7.

2. Farquhar to Bevin, April 18, 1946, p.3, [E3499/5/34], PRO.

3. The main concern in the discussion was the Iranian bill refusing further oil concessions during the war - supported by Eden, but opposed by Molotov. For more details, see: Foreign Relations 1945, VIII, p.365 (Washington D.C. 1969).

4. Foreign Relations 1945, VIII, pp.365-6.

5. Kuniholm, op. cit., p.308.

The Soviet military attaché in Tehran announced that the column had been halted because if large numbers of Iranian troops entered the Soviet zones, clashes with Russian personnel would inevitably occur. The Soviet Union considered the army, police and gendarme units already in the Soviet zone sufficient to deal with the rebellion.¹

This explanation was not fully accepted either in Tehran or in the West, and served, in fact, to intensify the problem. The Soviet action served also to reinforce the belief of many Iranians that their problems derived primarily from foreign presence and intervention in Iran. This belief was expressed so strongly that Muhammad Riza Shāh sent a note to both Soviet and British governments requesting notification of the date of withdrawal of their troops.²

The official date set for the removal of all occupying forces from Iran was in fact disputed by the protagonists. Tehran believed that the six months alluded to in the Tripartite Treaty were defined according to the defeat of Germany as being the end of the war. The central government insisted that since neither the Soviet Union nor Iran herself had taken any part in the war against Japan, these six months could not be thus defined according to the Japanese surrender. It therefore demanded withdrawal of foreign troops by November 1945, not March 1946.³

The Article 5 of the Tripartite Treaty itself stated that "all foreign forces should withdraw from Iran no later than six months after the war with Germany and her associates had

1. K. Jābarī, op. cit., p.203.

2. Partin, op. cit., p.57.

3. Feiss, Between War and Peace: Potsdam Conference, Princeton, 1960, p.302; Foreign Relations 1945, VIII, p.371.

ended!"¹ This clause allowed for an interpretation defining the end of the war as the Japanese surrender, and contributed towards the confusion that existed and that was exploited by the Soviet Union.

A formal request was thus made on May 19th, 1945, by Iran's Foreign Minister, Sipahbudī, to the three Big Powers for the immediate withdrawal of their troops from Iran.² Britain agreed to this request on two conditions: that the Soviets withdraw simultaneously,³ and that British oil interests in Iran would be safeguarded. The newly-appointed American ambassador to Iran, Wallace Murray, informed Tehran that American plans for withdrawal were underway, but that 3,500 American personnel would remain in Iran in order to protect their military installations, and 1,500 of these would be placed in Abadan to look after American oil plants and refineries etc.

Iran was encouraged by this reply from the United States. Prime Minister Sadr further approached Murray, asking for American support to stop British and Russian interference in Iran's internal affairs. Murray assured Sadr that Iran was becoming a major international issue and it was therefore appropriate that the Iranian issue should be discussed at the Potsdam Conference on July 21, 1945.⁴

This promise was duly kept, and Iran was made the subject of debate between the three Big Powers. Eden, the British Foreign Minister,⁵ proposed an immediate withdrawal from Tehran, and a gradual withdrawal from the provinces.⁶

1. Kuniholm, op. cit., p.143.

2. Farquhar to Bevin, April 18th, 1946, op. cit., p.3.

3. Ibid.

4. Foreign Relations 1945, VIII, p.372.

5. Kuniholm, op. cit., p.260.

6. Eden, The Reckoning, Boston, 1960, p.633.

Stalin rejected the second half of the proposal, and the final agreement reached called only for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Tehran.¹ The Potsdam Conference decided that the Iranian issue should be further discussed at the Foreign Ministers meeting in London in September, 1945.

The United States gave re-assurances to Iran following the end of the Potsdam Conference that she would continue using her influence to ensure the rapid withdrawal of troops from Iran, and that she respected Iran's independence and integrity. The U.S. government also made suggestions to Tehran concerning Iran's internal security: a rapprochement between Conservatives and Liberals in the country should be effected in order to stabilise the Iranian post-war political situation, and a Commission with members from Iran, Britain and the Soviet Union set up to study their differences, and especially Iran's internal situation and circumstances.²

Notice of American withdrawal was finally given to Iran on July 28, 1945, by George Byrnes, Secretary of State, through the U.S. ambassador in Tehran. The date proposed was November 1, 1945, but this was a unilateral move by America, for the Soviet Union and Britain both intended removal of their forces only by March 2, 1946.³

This 'agreement to disagree', as it were, over the withdrawal of Big Power troops from Iran soon turned into sharper antagonism among the Big Three, as a result of internal events within Iran during August/September, 1945.

The pressure against the democratic movement, particularly

1. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.4.

2. Foreign Relations 1945, VIII, pp.396-399.

3. Henry Roberts and Wilson, Britain and the U.S.: Problems and Co-operation, New York, 1953, p.191; Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.4.

from the Tudeh Party, that ensued during this period was country-wide, but it was especially harsh in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was both exploited by the central government and neglected by it, a combination policy designed, unintentionally, to strengthen the Azerbaijani resolve. This resulted in the establishment of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt Āzarbāyjān on September 3, 1945.¹

The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt was given support at this time by the Soviet Union. The Soviets believed that an Azerbaijan autonomous movement was a legitimate right under the Constitution, and did not consider it therefore as an uprising or rebellion against the central government in Tehran. Furthermore, the Soviets declared after the war their aim and role of supporting all democratic movements against fascist elements in national governments.² In the case of Iran, the USSR was doubly suspicious of the central government, since it was both reactionary and pro-Western. Since the Soviets had a border with Iran, which it was anxious to safeguard,³ the Soviet regime played its cards to limit Iranian power by backing the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt.⁴

This development caused great concern in the West, as well as the central government, as it was felt by Britain and America that the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt might be turned by the Soviets from a mere interest group into a fully-fledged movement.⁵ Thereby, the Soviet Union would be enabled to infiltrate the central government, known to be pro-West,⁶ and

1. See Chapter 4.

2. Eveling, S., American Consul in Tabriz, to George Byrnes, October 13, 1945.

3. Doenecke, J., "Iran's Role in Cold War Revisionism", Iranian Studies, Spring-Summer, 1972, p.99.

4. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.2.

5. For more details, see ibid., pp.1-3.

6. Doenecke, op. cit., p.99.

assume a position of influence. A similar process was suspected also in the Soviet interest given to the Tudeh Party.¹

Western propaganda thus began, claiming that the USSR intended the annexation of Azerbaijan.² This claim was justified on the grounds that **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** leaders had received training in the Soviet Union. The **Firqa** must thus be a Soviet puppet, being used as the agent to annex Azerbaijan.

Eveling's statements denied that these claims were true, for he regarded them as unfounded and ridiculous. Eveling attended a large number of **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** meetings himself, and clearly pointed out that in no way was the party seeking annexation to the Soviet Union.³

The central government went even further in maligning the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**. It announced that Soviet military personnel in mufti were leading the revolt in Azerbaijan. This claim was completely unrealistic, however, since the **Azaris** could easily be distinguished from Russians, nor were there that number of Soviet troops in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, it was denied by the Iranian Army present in Azerbaijan at the time, who had no sympathies with the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**.⁴

The true reason behind the Western propaganda lay in the West's opposition to Soviet expansion in Iran and the Middle East in the face of their own interests and anti-Communist policies. This fear is reflected in Truman's statement that the

1. Ramazani, "The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish People's Republic", Studies on the Soviet Union II (1971), p.458.

2. Seton-Watson, H., Neither War nor Peace: The Struggle for Power in the Postwar World, New York, Praeger, 1969, p.70.

3. Partin, op. cit., p.75.

4. Personal interviews with Cols. Sharīfī and Javādiyān, March/April, 1982.

Soviet Union desired domination of at least a part of Iran, if not all, and that this was part of her plan to control entirely all the oilfields within the Middle East;¹ and also in the recognition that any kind of democratic movement in the Middle East threatened their interests and must therefore be crushed and prevented from spreading.²

The central government propaganda was motivated by three factors. It was concerned that its pro-Western attitude should continue, simultaneously with Western influence in Iran, and thus demanded the suppression of the left element in Iran.³ Neither was the central government willing to share its power in the provinces, nor to institute reforms.⁴ Lastly, because the central government was not democratic, any democratic movements within Iran presented a challenge to its authority and power. Thus it was inherently opposed to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*.

American concern over the Iranian situation continued with the sustained active interest shown by the Soviet Union particularly in Azerbaijan. At the Foreign Ministers' Conference in London, September 1945,⁵ America declared that she was withdrawing her forces from Iran starting on November 1st, 1945. It was her wish that due to the delicate situation involving Iran herself and the Big Powers, that Britain and the Soviet Union should remove their troops beginning from January 1st, 1946,⁶ in order to stabilise the area and the growing conflict. Byrnes' proposal was rejected by both Bevin

1. H.S. Truman, Memoirs, 2 vols., New York, New America Library 19 , p.574.

2. Kumaramangalam, M., op. cit., pp.47ff.

3. Tulsiram, op. cit., p.106. See also Sapir Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, University of California, 1961, p.117.

4. Doenecke, op. cit., p.100.

5. J̄abari, op. cit., p.189.

6. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.4.

and Molotov, who nevertheless eventually agreed to a withdrawal date of March 2, 1946.¹

The situation in Azerbaijan rapidly deteriorated in the period following the Foreign Ministers' Conference. Government announcements proclaimed that the Soviets had introduced 12,000 additional troops into Bandar Pahlavī (Anzālī), an act which seriously worried the West. The anxiety of the central government, however, centred rather on the growth of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and increased its resolve to crush the movement. Tehran ordered troops to Azerbaijan, but the Iranian army was halted at Qazvīn by Soviet forces.³ The Soviet commander announced that an attack on Azerbaijan was an implicit attack on the Soviet Union herself, since Azerbaijan was a Soviet-occupied zone. Hakīmī was sufficiently cautious to order the Iranian troops to remain in Qazvīn until he had received an explanation from the Soviet attaché in Tehran. A formal note was sent to the attaché on November 23, 1945, requesting explanation of the incident.⁴ The reply given stated that the Soviet Union was attempting to maintain order in the area: an increase of forces would escalate the disturbance, at the same time as being unnecessary, since bloodshed would ensue, and the USSR would be forced to bring more Soviet troops into Azerbaijan to keep the balance. Thereby the situation would only be worsened.⁵

The central government remained unconvinced by the Soviet reply, and thus, to circumvent the military problem, made a request to George Byrnes through Husayn 'Alā', the Iranian ambassador in Washington, for American intervention. Husayn

1. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.4.

2. New York Times, November 9, 1945.

3. Ibid., November 21, 1945; Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.2.

4. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.2.

5. Ibid.

Ala' declared to Byrnes that the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was not an indigenous movement, but engineered and inspired by the Soviet Union.¹ It therefore posed a threat to Iran's independence and integrity, and American influence was sought to counter this development.

The reason behind this approach to the United States was the unwillingness of the central government to negotiate directly with the **Azerbaijanis** themselves. It was this refusal that was primarily responsible for the magnification of Iran's internal affairs into an international issue. For the first time, therefore, at the beginning of 1946, the internationalisation of the Azerbaijan problem was mooted within Iran: Humāyūnfār, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, announced that if the **Azerbaijani** movement could not be forestalled through negotiations (i.e. with the Soviets), Iran was willing to formulate a case to present before the U.N. Security Council.² Early in 1946, a start was indeed made on just such a formulation by the **Shāh** and his government.³

This appeal to America bore fruit at the subsequent Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Moscow in December 1945. During the discussion concerning Iran, Byrnes intimated quite forcefully to the Soviet Union that if she did not withdraw her support for the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, America would feel obliged to support the resolution, intended to be submitted to the U.N., proposed by Iran.

Stalin's reply indicated to Byrnes that while America could be sure of Soviet withdrawal at a later date, a Soviet presence in Azerbaijan was currently imperative in order to protect her oil interests, since the central government was

1. B. Kuniholm, op. cit., p.281.

2. Doenecke, op. cit., p.100.

3. Muhammad Riżā Pahlavi, Mission for my Country, New York, 1961, pp.116-119.

itself incapable of preventing sabotage. Her ultimate withdrawal was dependent upon the attitude shown by Tehran to the Soviet Union.¹

The British also made a suggestion to avoid taking the matter before the U.N. Security Council and thereby threatening any other discussions by antagonising the USSR. On 16th December, in Moscow, Bevin thus proposed a Tripartite Commission² composed of Britain, America and the Soviet Union. The Commission would be responsible for examining the Iranian problem and working towards its resolution. The American response was positive,³ but the Soviet reaction was unfavourable,⁴ and the central government, under Ḥakīmī, was also not keen. Tehran feared that the Commission might recommend a Provincial Council in which the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* might be represented. Ḥakīmī, while he realised the legitimacy of such a Council under the Constitution, yet resisted the participation of the *Firqa* and desired the crushing of the movement. Iranian liberals further disapproved of the establishment of a Commission of the Big Powers, because they considered Azerbaijan to be an internal affair and foreign powers to have no right to intervene therein.⁵ Nationalists, too, rejected the proposal - Dr. Muṣaddiq, for example, stated that a Commission might again divide Iran into two zones of influence as in 1907.⁶ Muṣaddiq made an alternative suggestion that the Iranian government should make representations to the

1. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly, New York, 1947, pp.118-20.

2. The Commission was to deal with the improvement of relations between the Central Government and the provinces by the establishment of provincial councils; supervision of the first elections to the provincial councils; the use of minority languages; investigation of the withdrawal of Allied troops. Farquhar to Bevin, op. cit., p.2.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.3.

5. Ustuvān, op. cit., Vol.II, p.223.

6. Ibid., p.218.

Soviet Union and to the Azerbaijanis to resolve the problem. He urged that the pro-West Ḥakīmī government step down and a neutral government be elected as the only means to effect the necessary steps towards negotiations.¹

Iran as a whole thus rejected this proposal, and favoured taking the matter before the U.N., believing that the Soviet injection of troops into Azerbaijan violated the Charter of the United Nations. This indicates clearly that the central government, backed by Iranian conservatives, was responsible for internationalising the Azerbaijan war, due to their inherent biases: in sharp contrast to the liberal belief, and wish, that the issue was capable of internal resolution, the pro-West, anti-Soviet and anti-Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt prevalence within the central government caused the matter to be turned into an international problem.

The Iranian government was pressured into accepting the proposal of a tripartite commission by the British, who indicated that if it was rejected, Ḥakīmī would be left to face the Soviet Union alone.² Ḥakīmī was able, however, to force a modification of the proposal whereby the Commission should discuss the issue with Iranian representatives in Iran itself, primarily concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops according to the Tripartite Treaty of 1942 and the Tehran Declaration of 1943.³ Ḥakīmī then made representations to the Soviet Union, which were rejected with a refusal to participate in the Commission: such a Commission, it was declared, was a threat to Iran's sovereignty and integrity.⁴

1. Razm, yr.1, no.267, p.988.

2. Fatimi, N.S., Oil Diplomacy Powderkeg in Iran, New York, 1954, p.283.

3. Jabari, op. cit., p.230.

4. Ustuvān, Siyāsāt-i Muvāzana-yi Manfī dar Majlis-i Chahārdahum, Teheran, Vol.II, p.233.

Western attitudes to the modifications demanded by the Ḥakīmī government were also divided: American opinion was quite in favour of them, but the British disagreed, and insisted that Bevin's model should stand, as it was.¹

Internal opposition to the plan came from within the Majlis. Dr. Muṣaddiq, for example, thanked the Soviet Union for its refusal to participate, for if she had, the uniting of the Big Powers would have brought an end to Iranian sovereignty. The Powers should rather institute a democratic government in Iran and respect her independence and integrity, which they themselves guaranteed.²

As a result of these divisions and conflicts, Ḥakīmī decided to cancel the whole arrangement for a Commission.³ Tehran was then left with three options: negotiations with the **Azerbaijanis** themselves, negotiations directly with the Soviet Union, or recourse to the resolution of the problem through the U.N.

The American ambassador, Murray, urged Ḥakīmī to take the first option, approaching the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** with a negotiating team made up of his most able members of Cabinet.⁴

The second option was strongly supported by radicals, liberals and nationalists - such as Muṣaddiq - in Iran, and also to a lesser extent by Britain and America.⁵ The emphasis here was laid on total efforts to reach direct negotiations with the Soviet Union, but this did not foreclose final resort to the U.N. for resolution of the problem.⁶

1. Razm, yr.6, no.1585, pp.2-4.

2. Ibid., yr.1, no.267, p.988.

3. Ibid.

4. Partin, op. cit., p.109.

5. K. Ustuvān, op. cit., pp.231-42.

6. Ibid.

The majority opinion backed the internationalisation of the problem through recourse to the U.N. Security Council. The **Shāh**, Conservative and pro-British deputies within the **Majlis** backed this intention, with the result that **Hakīmī**, while himself preferring direct negotiations with both Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union, was limited by his own government's attitude.¹

Therefore, at the beginning of 1946, the **Hakīmī** government officially adopted recourse to the United Nations.² Thus **Hasan Taqīzāda**, the head of the Iranian delegation to the U.N., wrote a formal letter to the Secretary of the Security Council, saying that the Soviet Union was interfering in the internal affairs of Iran. The Azerbaijan affair thus threatened world peace, and the Iranians therefore had made great attempts at reaching negotiations with the Soviet government. Since these had failed, she was now asking for the issue to be put on the Security Council agenda.

On January 24th, 1946, **Vyshinsky**, the head of the Soviet U.N. delegation, denied the allegations made by Iran against the USSR. He asserted the Soviet view that Azerbaijan was indeed an internal Iranian affair, and that therefore the matter could and should be resolved through direct negotiations with the people of Azerbaijan, and neither with herself or through the U.N. According to the Irano-Soviet Treaty of 1921 and the Tripartite Treaty of 1942, the Soviet Union had a legitimate right to maintain troops in Iran. She could not at present afford to withdraw forces because her interests were threatened by the reactionary **Hakīmī** government. **Vyshinsky** concluded the speech with a comparison with British troops maintained in Indonesia and Greece: if these remained, the

1. **Jabari**, *op. cit.*, p.238.

2. **Rahbar**, no.678, 1st Farvādīn, 1325 (21st March, 1946).

Soviet Union reserved the right to maintain troops in Iran.¹

Taqīzāda replied on January 26th, claiming before the Security Council that Iran's case was based on the true facts, and should therefore be examined carefully and thoroughly by the U.N.²

During this exchange within the U.N., a major change occurred within the Iranian government. Pressure from general reaction against Ḥakīmī's policies, combined with opposition inside the Cabinet, particularly from Dr. Muṣaddiq, weakened Ḥakīmī's power. Consequently, unable to resolve these difficulties, he found himself forced to resign. On January 20th, he stated: "Now that I have succeeded in putting the Iranian case before the Security Council, I am resigning".³

Ḥakīmī's resignation produced great surprise in the West. It was thought that the Iranian affair might now be withdrawn from the agenda of the Security Council. However, Intiḡām, the Foreign Minister, announced that Ḥakīmī's resignation had been called for in order to make negotiations with the Soviet Union easier. Nevertheless, if these failed, Iran would return the issue to the U.N.⁴

The obvious successor to Ḥakīmī was Aḥmad Qavām, Qavām was a native of Azerbaijan, who ostensibly supported the need for reforms, and who was a more acceptable figure to the Soviet Union, with long political experience. Thus, he was elected Prime Minister and formed the new Cabinet, on January 26th, 1946.⁵

1. For the Soviet point of view, see Doenecke, *op. cit.*, pp.100-101.

2. For more details, see *Rahbar*, no.678, 1st Farvadīn, 1325 (21st March, 1946).

3. *New York Times*, January 22, 1946.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Partesan, J.G., *Soviet-American Confrontation: Post War Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War*, Baltimore, 1973, p.179.

Qavām and the International Conflict

The premiership of Qavām, beginning on January 26th, 1946, reflected to a considerable extent his personal influence and political outlook. In his earlier administration, of 1921, his American leanings led to the unsuccessful Northern Oil Concession attempt; and his lifelong encouragement of American presence culminated in the Millspaugh financial mission of 1944.¹

Unsurprisingly, his pro-Western attitudes had external as well as internal effects: the gradual reduction of Communist influence aimed ultimately toward the removal of the Soviet presence and thereby the collapse of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*. His conciliatory tactics marked an unprecedented subtlety in Iranian politics and Qavām operated successfully by deceit.

Qavām's consistent policy of 'positive equilibrium'² was mainly a concessional balance between East and West and he recognised his main problem as being the Russian desire for a concession in the North³ to balance Britain's right in the South. His positive overtures to the USSR were intended to discourage her support of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and to call her political bluff. The policy⁴ worked and Stalin viewed Qavām's premiership with apparent favour, which was reflected in official Tudeh newspaper statements of approval for Qavām's national policies.⁵

Indeed, the Tudeh was viewed as an internal threat

1. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.494, 11th Farvardīn, 1325 (31st March, 1946).

2. *Abrahāmian, Between Two Revolutions*, Princeton, 1982, p.227. Wilber, D.N., *Contemporary Iran*, New York, Praeger, 1963, p.122.

3. Doenecke, *op. cit.*, p.98.

4. *Ibrahimian, op. cit.*, p.228.

5. *Rahbar* no.845,

corresponding to external (Russian) pressures and the lifting of martial law in Tehran¹ is understood to have been an overture of appeasement since Tudeh meetings and cells had been particularly affected by the restriction of the right of assembly. More open conciliation followed in the legalising of Tudeh's existence and the appointment of three leaders to key cabinet posts.² Finally the displacement of General Arfah and various pro-British figures demonstrated Qavām's new 'neutral' image.³

On the other hand, however, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was distrustful of Qavām. Pīshavarī, both before and after becoming leader, criticised the premier on the grounds of past failures,⁴ but the movement were in an awkward position since despite uncertainty about Qavām, he was preferred to Ḥakīmī, and their fear about his motives towards them was balanced by the modest hope they held for his promise of direct negotiations with the Soviet Union.

But no sooner had Qavām arrived in power, than the issue was wrested from his control and forced to the attention of the U.N. on 30th January, and the promised direct negotiations with the USSR became an inescapable reality in the resolution of the Security Council⁵ which demanded continuous contact with the parties and reserved the right of intervention to itself in the event of failure, maintaining the issue on the agenda.⁶ The Iranian delegation, headed by Qavām himself,⁷

1. *Abrahimian, op. cit.*, p.229.

2. *New York Times*, 19th February, 1946.

3. *Ibid.*, 17th February, 1946.

4. *Āzhīr* no.40, 28th Tir, 1322 (19th July, 1943); *Āzarbāyjān*, no.72, 15th Day, 1324 (5th January, 1946).

5. *New York Times*, 31st January, 1946.

6. *Fatemi, op. cit.*, p.293.

7. *New York Times*, February 2, 1946; *Īrān-i Mā*, no.468, 29th Bāhmān, 1324 (18th February, 1946).

was welcomed in Moscow on 29th Bahman, 1324 (18th February, 1946) but the meetings with Stalin and Molotov reached no firm conclusions.

The linked issues of oil, Azerbaijan and troop withdrawal demonstrated fundamental differences of approach, Molotov demanding oil concessions and trying to avoid negotiations about Azerbaijan by referring Qavām to Pīshavarī and his administration. Even his promised withdrawal date, March 2nd, was qualified by a requirement of favourable actions on Iran's part.¹ In response, Qavām was obliged to reject Soviet demands in order to maintain consistency with previous Iranian policy.²

Moderated Soviet proposals for a joint-stock company and suggested reforms in Azerbaijan were intended as a conciliatory package, and withdrawal was still promised, commencing on the agreed date, March 2nd. Qavām replied very harshly,³ showing a belligerent attitude towards Azerbaijan's linguistic demands and insisting upon completion of the Soviet withdrawal by 2nd March before any concession would be made - thus the Soviet memorandum was effectively rejected.⁴ The angered Russians, on March 1st, answered uncompromisingly,⁵ withdrawing the assistance earlier proffered and stating that the Northern force would remain to protect the Soviet's insecure Iranian interests,⁶ which she saw as threatened, and she justified herself in terms of the Irano-Russian Treaty of 1921.⁷

1. Dād, no.713, 26th Farvardīn, 1325 (15th April, 1946).

2. Ibid., no.714, 27th Farvardīn, 1325 (16th April, 1946).

3. For more details of the Molotov memorandum, see ibid.

4. Ibid., no.717, 30th Farvardīn, 1325 (19th March, 1946).

5. Razm, yr.3, no.783, pp.2174-2201.

6. Rossow, R., "Red Tanks from a Moslem graveyard", in Lisagov and Higgins, Overture in Heaven, New York, 1964, p.155; and Doenecke, op. cit., p.99.

7. See Chapter 1, p.45, f/n 2.

A Russian announcement on March 2nd describing the withdrawal only from the less problematic regions of Mashhad, Shāhrūd, and Simnān¹ angered Qavām, for whom the withdrawal date was of supreme symbolic importance.

With no major successes gained in the fortnight of talks, other than the appointment of Sadchikov as Russian ambassador, a joint declaration was published on March 5th² promising a later resumption of the talks, and upon his return to Iran, Qavām confessed to the press his failure to move the USSR on the issues important to the Iranian central government.³

These direct negotiations drew widespread popular support, but the approval of the bulk of the people proved not to be an accurate reflection of the true efficacy of international talks, and a number of political figures including Musaddiq and the contributors to Jabha, considered talks with Tabriz to be a more acceptable and less dangerous alternative solution.⁵ The failure of the Russian talks pressurised Qavām into this second field of negotiations.

The situation which subsequently obtained, in which the USSR failed to withdraw its troops by 2nd March, 1946, caused a controversy which inspired a strong reaction from Iran and the West, and ultimately contributed to the beginning of the Cold War.

British reaction was strong because the importance to her of Iranian interests,⁶ and the traditional rivalry existing in

1. Īrān-i Mā, no.478, 13th Isfand, 1324 (4th March, 1946).

2. Ibid., no.484, 20th Isfand, 1324 (11th March, 1946).

3. Ibid., no.488, 24th Isfand, 1324 (15th March, 1946).

4. Ibid., no.472, 6th Isfand, 1324 (25th February, 1946).

5. Jabha, no.87, 26th Bahman, 1324 (15th March, 1946).

6. Īrān-i Mā, no.374, 2nd Urdibihisht, 1324 (22nd April, 1945).

Iran with Russian influence meant that Britain was opposed to the Northern concessions although she would not have been concerned if they had existed anywhere else in the world.¹ Her sole reason for the ultimate acceptance of the Russians' concession was the hope of Soviet withdrawal and the promise of the defence of her own rights.² By November 1945, Britain was confident that her influence in the government and army was secure.³ Britain's stance in reaction to the events of March 1946 became gradually aligned to the United States, and the U.K. ultimately relinquished her position as Superpower in Iran.⁴

America's developing rôle was therefore diametrically opposite to Britain. At the beginning of World War II, America was unbiased to the point of neutrality⁵ and was acceptable as an intermediary amongst the signatories of the Tripartite Treaty. The increasing involvement of America brought about a growing estrangement from the Soviet Union⁶ as America took a firm stand over the non-interference clause of the Tehran Declaration,⁷ and the active encouragement by the U.K. and Iran to take a strong position⁸ was supported by American

1. Īrān-i Mā, no.374, 2nd Urdibihisht, 1324 (22nd April, 1945).

2. Jabha, no.182, 30th Khurdād, 1325 (20th June, 1946).

3. Īrān-i Mā, no.310, 17th Day, 1323 (7th January, 1945).

4. New York Times, 2nd March, 1946.

5. Ittilā'āt, no.5997, 12th Isfand, 1324 (3rd March, 1946). Foreign Relations 1946, VII, p.336.

6. For more details, see Thorpe, "Truman's Ultimatum to Stalin on the 1946 Azerbaijan Crisis: The Making of a Myth", Journal of Political Studies, vol.40, 1978, passim.

7. See C. Hull, Memoirs, New York, 1948, 2:156-157. Roosevelt, E. As He Saw It, New York, 1946, p.193.

8. Regarding Iranian pressure, see: Goodrich and Simons, The UN and the Maintenance of Peace and Security, Washington, 1962, pp.285-6; and New York Times, 3rd March, 1946. And for U.K. pressure see New York Times, 2nd March, 1946.

suspensions that Russian non-co-operation might be significant in future relations elsewhere. Iran seemed to be a test-case for the developing Cold War.

A third significant party was the Central Iranian Government which, inspired by Sayyid Żiyā, set out to discredit Soviet motives¹ and depopularise the Firqa's image as a true revolutionary movement.² In its weakness, Iran looked overseas for assistance and pressurised the Western bloc to take an active part in resisting the Soviet influence.³

Lastly, the Tudeh Party itself activated its power to countermand government propaganda, justifying Soviet action with criticisms of an Iranian government seen by them as undemocratic, and, acting as the self-styled national mouthpiece of the USSR, pointed out the necessary preconditions for the Soviet withdrawal,⁴ and stated that the Soviet Union needed to strengthen the growing democratic movements in Iran, justifying its interference with reference to Britain's imperial career and contemporaneous intervention in various Mediterranean states.⁵

Meanwhile, on the diplomatic front, Qavām returned from Moscow having failed to achieve a successful withdrawal; but despite the statement that negotiations would continue, Qavām quickly went to Murray, the American ambassador, and extracted statements of support in the event of an Iranian approach to the U.N.⁶ Despite Soviet objections,⁷ on 18th March, 1946,

1. Rahbar, nos.664, 666 and 667, 14th, 16th and 17th Isfand, 1324 (5th, 6th and 7th March, 1945).

2. Ibid.

3. New York Times, 3rd March, 1946; Rahbar, no.677, 29th Isfand, 1324 (20th March, 1946), no.663, 13th Isfand, 1324 (4th March, 1946).

4. Rahbar, no.666, 16th Isfand, 1324 (7th March, 1946).

5. Pravda, December 14, 1945, quoted in Āzarbāyjān, no.84, 20th Day, 1324 (10th January, 1946).

6. Foreign Relations 1946, pp.354-6.

7. Ibid., p.357.

^c Alā' presented a formal note to the Security Council, which appeared before the Council on 25th March,¹ and which declared that:

- a) The Soviet failure to withdraw her troops after March 2nd, 1946, was a violation of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942.
- b) Soviet intervention in Iran's internal affairs through military presence and political agents (i.e. the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and *Kumala-yi Kurdistān*) was a violation of the Tripartite Treaty, the Tehran Declaration, and the United Nations' Charter.
- c) Iran urged the U.N. therefore to take immediate action under Article 35 of the U.N. Charter, which states that the Security Council is given authority to investigate any conflict that might threaten international peace.²

Qavām had made supportive statements indirectly but the extent of his complicity is uncertain³ and the timing was unfortunate, with Sadchikov due to arrive on March 20th to continue negotiations.⁴ The surprised Soviets requested more time, until 10th April, to prepare, and Sadchikov pressed to conclude negotiations and by March 25th withdrawal was well under way, with a six-week completion target.⁵

But the debate went ahead on the 26th and the Council made its increasingly common East-West split, the latter

1. Lie, T., In the Cause of Peace: Seven Years with the UN, New York, McMillan, 1954, p.76.

2. New York Times, 19th-20th March, 1946 for more details.

3. Dād, no.395, 7th Farvadīn, 1325 (27th March, 1946).

4. New York Times, 21st March, 1946.

5. Rahbar, no.679, 8th Farvadīn, 1325 (28th March, 1946).

suggesting that 'Alā' present the Iranian evidence and Gromyko protesting that the latest agreement pre-empted the U.N.'s interference.¹ 'Alā' failed to produce evidence to support the Russian claims and the Council maintained the issue on its agenda,² despite Russian claims that participation by a non-Council-member was not competent.³ The French-proposed commission⁴ made no real improvement but supported the Soviet postponement.⁵

Gromyko walked out on the 27th⁶ and 'Alā' presented his case.⁷ On 29th March the Council decreed that Iran and the USSR should hold talks and report⁸ on 2nd April, 1946.⁹ On that date, 'Alā' shocked everyone by withdrawing the complaint and supporting the Soviet position, claiming that the central government needed outside help in negotiations with the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*.¹⁰ The main activity of the Council was now unnecessary but America wished to substantiate the Russian withdrawal and the discussion was postponed until May 6th, when the USSR and Iran would report on the state of the withdrawal, and the U.N. would determine its future rôle.¹¹

Qavām's attitude to the Russian negotiations was very much coloured by his continual American leanings and before opening negotiations with Moscow, he promised ambassador

1. Tabari, op. cit., p.265.

2. Ibid., p.276.

3. For theoretical implications, see Byrnes, op. cit., pp.126 and 304.

4. Partin, op. cit., p.143.

5. U.N. Security Council Journal, London, 1946, pp.385-6 and 399-400.

6. Rossow, R., "The Battle of Azerbaijan", MEJ, vol.10, 1956, p.23.

7. U.N. Security Council Journal, op. cit., pp.423-30.

8. Yearbook of the UN, 1946-47, p.331.

9. See also, U.N. Security Council Journal, op. cit., pp.433-44.

10. For a similar concept, see Abrahamian, op. cit., pp.172-4.

11. Yearbook of the UN, op. cit., p.332.

Murray that any joint-stock company would be balanced by an American concession in Baluchistan;¹ this American friendship was vital to the survival of a government which trusted the USSR as little as its people did Britain, and the diplomatic path was thus laid for the two treaties of 4th April, one of which was a general diplomatic agreement, the other a specifically concessional oil treaty,² and Gromyko demanded, on the 6th, that Iran be removed from the agenda.³ Stettinius, the U.S. representative, urged the Council to wait until May 6th⁴ and Sadchikov replied in Tehran by pressurising Qavām to withdraw the case, issuing veiled threats⁵ which Qavām took very seriously,⁶ consulting the U.S. military attache Jernigan, who also leaned on him not to withdraw the complaint for reasons of national prestige in the U.N.⁷

Qavām's final submission to Russian pressure relieved him both of the popular support for withdrawal of the issue and, partially, of his fear that continued debate in the U.N. might tempt Russia to leave a very healthy Firqa behind them when they left. 'Alā' was instructed to withdraw the case,⁸ to great Western disappointment and obvious Soviet delight.

Now the Security Council was torn between the technical resolution of the problem according to U.N. principles, and the significant Anglo-American suspicion that Iran's withdrawal was enforced.⁹ When 'Alā' privately confirmed this to

1. Dunyā, yearly publication 29, p.369.

2. See Appendix.

3. U.N. Security Council Journal, *op. cit.*, p.489.

4. New York Times, 8th, 13th and 17th April, 1946.

5. Ibid., 17th April, 1946.

6. See Chapter 1, p.45 f/n 2.

7. Foreign Relations, 1946, vol.VII, pp.416-18.

8. See Dunyā, no.30, p.255.

9. New York Times, 16th April, 1946.

Henderson, a Foreign Office secretary.¹ American support was sought for a proposal for the U.N. to supervise the 15th Majlis elections in an attempt to prevent a Tudeh walkover, and for an American statement that Qavām was working under Soviet pressure in order to keep the issue alive and viable.² Thus Article 33,³ which would have forced the dismissal of the case, was declared inapplicable with Dutch and British support, the latter party declaring the resolution of April 4th to be still valid.

Soviet charges of Western bellicosity were answered with claims of Russian intervention,⁴ and on April 23rd the issue was retained, at least until May 6th.⁵

Now Soviet wishes for a peaceful border and a smooth beginning to the oil project led to her pressurizing Tehran to conclude negotiations, and Qavām's desire to bring a secure peace and appease his people ensured his enthusiastic response.

The variety of issues discussed was compounded by the bifurcation between the internal and international aspects of the crisis. But one clear and undeniable linch-pin in the whole situation was Azerbaijan, and it shall constitute the principal subject of the following section.

The Autonomous Movement of Azerbaijan

The problem of Azerbaijan was the corner-stone of negotiations between the central government and the Soviet

1. Partin, op. cit., p.159.

2. Ibid., pp.159-60.

3. U.N. Security Council Journal, op. cit., pp.497-8.

4. Koenecke, op. cit., p.100.

5. U.N. Security Council Journal, op. cit., pp.521-32.

Union in both a positive and negative way. The lack of understanding and attention paid to its resolution, however, elevated its negative elements at the same time as eclipsing any positive features it might have possessed. It thereby increased in magnitude and significance, and Azerbaijan and the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* suffered the consequences.

The wishes of both the Soviet Union and Iran were fulfilled in the treaties concluded between the two countries: Iran's desire for Soviet withdrawal was, on paper, guaranteed by her agreement to a Soviet oil concession, for which purpose the Soviets had primarily opened negotiations with Iran. However, fulfilment of these treaties was in practical terms dependent upon resolution of the disturbance in Azerbaijan, since a stable situation there was the prerequisite for the central government's ability to approve the oil treaty; while a safe border was necessary to avoid the return of Soviet military forces for 'defence' purposes.

Article 3 of the April 4th treaty laid down proposals concerning Azerbaijan. These were in no way, however, sufficient or adequate to deal with the problem. No practical measures to implement the proposed peaceful negotiations or reforms were specified, despite the condition that these should be performed according to the Constitutional Law. Furthermore, it contained no assurances from the Soviet Union that she would support the democratic movement, a necessary factor, since the Soviet aid was in reality the only surety for the survival and establishment of such movements in Iran.

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* itself approved the treaty of April 4th, 1946, but had several reservations and apprehensions.¹ It did not want to lose Soviet sponsorship, and supported the parallel oil treaty, so that despite its hesitancy over the

1. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.170, 22nd Farvardīn, 1325 (11th April, 1946).

Azerbaijan measures laid out in it, it raised no voice of protest. Neither were the leaders sure about Qavām's reconciliation policy, since they distrusted his motives and purposes, but wished to avoid conflict with the central government and further bloodshed; thus when Qavām announced in a press interview¹ that he was in the process of preparing an invitation to an Azerbaijan delegation for talks, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* accepted reluctantly in the hope that the negotiations might prove successful in the long run.

Future events vindicated their pessimism, since Qavām's promises were broken, nor could the Soviet Union support the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* due to international pressure. Therefore, the central government, backed by the West, finally suppressed the movement in December 1946.

While the Iranian case was being discussed at the U.N., Qavām was making efforts to settle the central government's dispute with the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* on a purely internal basis. Qavām outlined a set of proposals which were already approved by the Council of State in the absence of the *Majlis*, which was in recess, on 22nd April, 1946:²

1. The National Parliament of Azerbaijan was to be dissolved, and its ministers to become directors of various departments, with their instructions coming from Tehran, within the new Provincial Council.
2. The governor of Azerbaijan should be approved both by the Provincial Council and the central government; and the army chiefs and gendarmerie officers were to be appointed by the central government.

1. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.500, 19th Farvardīn, 1325 (8th April, 1946).

2. *Dād*, no.720, 3rd Urdībihisht, 1325 (23rd April, 1946).

3. The official language of Azerbaijan was to be Persian, but official documents should also be written in Turkish, and the first 5 years of primary education should be in Turkish.
4. Part of the annual tax revenue received from Azerbaijan would be spent on reforms in the province.
5. Freedom of activity should be granted to all democratic movements and trade unions.
6. There should be no persecution or harassment of *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* members.
7. The central government agreed to a system of proportional representation for Azerbaijan, in the *Majlis*. Since the elections had already been held, this proposal would be given to the 15th *Majlis* for approval, and additional M.P.s subsequently elected, to complete the necessary number.

These proposals were sent to Azerbaijan through *Ipakchiyān*, the Azerbaijan representative in the 14th *Majlis*, with an invitation to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* leaders to come to Tehran for discussions over them. *Pīshavarī* thus led a delegation, which arrived in Tehran on 29th April, 1946. Before leaving, *Pīshavarī* gave a speech at Tabriz airport: "The freedom which we have achieved is safeguarded by the *Fidā'īs* and is inviolable. Azerbaijan will fight to the last man to retain this freedom".¹

Pīshavarī received an overwhelming welcome at Tehran airport. Many reporters were present, and workers streamed

1. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.185, 9th *Urdībihisht*, 1325 (29th April, 1946).

to meet his arrival, and the crush was so great that extra security was provided by the gendarmes in order to ensure general safety; the gendarmes were themselves attempting to dissuade workers from entering the airport.¹ This resulted in an unfortunate incident whereby the gendarmes began firing, killing two people, and injuring 8 others.²

Pīshavarī's welcomers paraded placards with slogans demanding from the delegation efforts to secure the freedom not only of Azerbaijan but of the whole of Iran. These carried messages such as: "Be careful! Do not wreck the negotiations, for the freedom of Iran depends on the outcome of your talks".³ These requests were supported with additional force by the Tehran press, which further stressed the delegation's need for a national vision rather than a narrow Azerbaijan one - Iran was not only Azerbaijan - and if they did so, they would receive the backing of progressives throughout Iran.⁴

Analysis of the press editorials of this time indicates that the Iranian people as a whole favoured the system and reforms instituted in Azerbaijan, and wished for their implementation throughout Iran, in spite of the propaganda campaign mounted by the central government against the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt. Kayhān*, a non-political paper, urged Pīshavarī to extend his activity beyond Azerbaijan: if Qavām did not accede to this, Pīshavarī should return to Azerbaijan and cut off any further negotiations.⁵

The Azerbaijan delegation met with a delegation appointed

1. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.518, 9th Urdībīhisht, 1325 (29th April, 1946).

2. *Kayhān*, no.943, 9th Urdībīhisht, 1325 (29th April, 1946).

3. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.199, 25th Urdībīhisht, 1325 (15th May, 1946).

4. *Jabha*, no.144, 17th Urdībīhisht, 1325 (7th May, 1946).

5. *Kayhān*, no.943, 9th Urdībīhisht, 1325 (9th May, 1946).

by Qavām.¹ After several meetings, however, no agreement had been reached: the Azerbaijan delegation was unable to accept the proposals because most depended upon the approval of the 15th Majlis which was not yet in session and the delegation could not trust its future consideration; and it also refused to amalgamate the National Army of Azerbaijan with the Iranian army as called for by Qavām.² Pīshavarī resisted this fiercely out of past experience of the brutality and crimes perpetrated by the gendarmerie in Azerbaijan. The nascent democratic movement would be crushed by the Iranian army and gendarmes if neither were reformed.³

Although both parties were eager for a solution, with the constant encouragement also of Sadchikov,⁴ the negotiations between Qavām and the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were ultimately unsuccessful due to the uncompromising objection raised by Rīzā Shāh to the autonomous movement or to Soviet influence in Iran.⁵ Thus, the delegation returned to Azerbaijan after 15 days, on 13th May, but the way was left open for continued diplomatic negotiations.

General disappointment over the failure of the talks was widely felt throughout Iran. Qavām sensed this strongly and was concerned to maintain his prestige with public opinion. He thus declared that despite the apparent collapse of negotiations, he himself was doing everything to ensure their continuation. Qavām released a declaration⁶ addressing itself

1. The former included: J. Pīshavarī, S. Pādagān, Dr. Jahān Shāhlū, F. Ibrāhīmī, C. Shāhīn, M.S. Sayyid Ḥajjī; the latter: Lankarānī, Farmanfarmāyān, Ipakchiyan, M. Siparī, Muzaḥḥar Fīrūz.

2. *Dād*, no.735, 22nd Urdībihisht, 1325 (12th May, 1946).

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Āzarbāyān*, no.199, 25th Urdībihisht, 1325 (15th May, 1946); *Dād*, no.741, 29th Urdībihisht, 1325 (19th May, 1946).

6. *Dād*, no.741, 29th Urdībihisht, 1325 (19th May, 1946).

to the **Azerbaijani** people, in which having outlined the differences between the two delegations, he emphasised the continuation of talks: Qavām appealed to the Azerbaijan delegation to make possible elections for the **Majlis** by creating a stable condition in the province. Thereby, the newly elected **Majlis** could approve the proposed oil treaty of April 4th, 1946, and at the same time elections for **Azerbaijani** M.P.s could take place.¹

Qavām played his cards so successfully, gaining the support of the majority of Iranian progressives, the Tudeh and even the Soviet Union (who declared Qavām to be a brilliant politician), that his power and influence became rival to that of **Muhammad Riẓā Shāh** himself.² Qavām was emboldened to criticise the **Shāh's** policy, but in reality there existed a power struggle between them that was itself rooted in the fact that **Muhammad Riẓā Shāh** was pro-British, while Qavām supported the United States.³ Qavām, in order to increase his power, arrested a number of pro-British politicians, including Sayyid Ziyā, and K. Rashtī, **Riẓā Shāh's** personal assistant, and a good friend of the British.⁴

Muhammad Riẓā Shāh disapproved strongly of Qavām's attitude⁵ and manoeuvring for power, and mentioned his grave reservations to Murray in Tehran. Qavām was also in conflict⁶ with 'Alā' in Washington, who was strongly in sympathy with the American view and was an important figure in Iran's international relations.

1. Dād, no.737, 25th Urdībihisht, 1325 (14th May, 1946).

2. Ibid., no.741, 29th Urdībihisht, 1325 (18th May, 1946).

3. Īrān-i Mā, no.522, 15th Urdībihisht, 1325 (5th May, 1946).

4. Ibid., nos.522 and 523, 15th and 16th Urdībihisht, 1325 (5th and 6th May, 1946).

5. Papers of George Allen, op. cit., p.39.

6. New York Times, 25th-26th May, 1946.

Despite the completed withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran by May 9th, 1946, 'Alā' subsequently sent a formal letter on behalf of Tehran to the U.N. Secretary General, stating that the requested report by Iran and the Soviets on the withdrawal could not be made because Iran could still not implement its authority over Azerbaijan as a result of Soviet interference; conditions for the making of the report were thus not available.¹

Qavām was angered by 'Alā's unauthorised statement, and immediately sent a telegram to the U.N. denying its validity, and confirming the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces.² The Security Council ignored Qavām's telegram, and retained the Iranian case on its agenda: the West was not in fact satisfied with withdrawal. Her ultimate aim was the suppression of all movements in Iran, particularly in Azerbaijan, which were contrary to her interests, so withdrawal could not therefore be for them the end of the matter. Secondly, the contradiction between 'Alā' and Qavām made a proper decision concerning the issue impossible.

For the above reason, Qavām ordered 'Alā' not to attend any further meetings of the U.N., although he was permitted to remain as Iranian ambassador in Washington.³

Qavām's real aim was the suppression of all democratic movements within Iran, and especially the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* Azerbaijan. His enthusiasm for negotiations was merely a front to buy popular support,⁴ for while publicly denying bloodshed,⁵ Qavām was preparing the ground for an invasion

1. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.537, 1st Khurdād, 1325 (22nd May, 1946).

2. *New York Times*, 21st May, 1946.

3. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.537, 1st Khurdād, 1325 (22nd May, 1946).

4. *Rahbar*, no.743, 23rd Khurdād, 1325 (13th June, 1946).

5. *Kayhān*, no.960, 13th Urdībihisht, 1325 (3rd April, 1946).

of Azerbaijan.¹ For example, in the summer,² Qavām assured the American embassy in Tehran that following the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the Iranian army would be sent into Azerbaijan to restore order and the authority of the central government without delay.³ His pretence of negotiations had nevertheless continued, and Qavām sent a delegation headed by Muzaffar Fīrūz, his political assistant, to Tabriz. An agreement was reached on 13th June, 1946, according to which the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* accepted the establishment of a Provincial Council upon the dissolving of the National Parliament, and gave the central government authority over Khamsa and its capital Zanjān. In return, they gained the following concessions:⁴

1. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* would be responsible for the appointment of the governor, director of finance and other directors, of Azerbaijan, whose recommendation would be made to the Provincial Council, but whose approval would come from Tehran.
2. The Provincial Council would have the authority of inspection over all government officials.
3. 75% of the tax levied should belong to Azerbaijan, and of the customs revenue given to Tehran, 25% would be allocated to the University of Tabriz.
4. The division of land amongst the peasants was permitted, but should be finally approved by the 15th Majlis.
5. The use of Turkish, as well as of other minority

1. *Dunyā*, no.30, p.218.

2. Allen, *op. cit.*, p.56.

3. *Dunyā*, no.30, p.218.

4. *Īrān-i Mā*,

languages, was permitted, parallel with Persian, within Azerbaijan, although not without; Azerbaijanis were allowed the use of Āzari-Turkish throughout their education, but other minorities were restricted to the first 5 years of primary school.

6. The central government promised to carry out the necessary reforms in Azerbaijan, such as the railway between Tabriz and Miyāna.
7. Azerbaijan would be given Takāb and Sardasht in place of the province of Khamsa.
8. Central government gave assurances that they would introduce a new democratic electoral system, giving women the vote, and based upon proportional representation, although dependent on the Majlis' approval.
9. Town Council elections were to be held throughout Iran subsequent to Majlis approval.
10. A commission composed of both central government and Firqa representatives should be appointed, in consequence of the inability to resolve the question of the Azerbaijan army and the Fidā'ī, which would discuss a solution for the problem.
11. The government promised a reform and re-naming of the gendarmerie.

This treaty was signed in duplicate by Muzaffar Fīrūz and Pīshavarī in Tabriz on 13th June, 1946. Thereafter, the National Parliament was turned into a local branch of the central government, and the ministers became head of its various departments. S. Jāvīd was appointed as governor of Azerbaijan, but Pīshavarī himself was content to remain the

leader of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, without any official post.

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* switched policies following the signing of the treaty: they believed Qavām truly to desire a democratic government; it was their task to be the model for the whole of Iran, and they should thus unite with all progressive and democratic movements in order to free Iran from its reactionary elements and establish a democratic state.¹

Pīshavarī was himself optimistic over the treaty, considering it to embody all the aims and wishes expressed in the September 3rd declaration.² His trust in Qavām was later proved to be badly misplaced, as can also be seen from proper analysis of the treaty itself.

The agreement, while admittedly giving a fair number of concessions to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, could not however stand up for use as a model for democratic government in the whole of Iran, since it was a narrow treaty made solely with the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān*. Most of the concessions were dependent, further, on approval by the 15th *Majlis*, the elections for which had not yet been held, and the results of which were an unknown factor.

The future of the National Army, and the *Fidā'ī* groups, the main defenders of Azerbaijan, was given into the hands of a somewhat undefined and therefore powerless commission, which ultimately was incapable of reaching a decision that favoured the *Azerbaijani* people: the National Army was finally dissolved into the Iranian army, and the *Fidā'īs* into the gendarmerie.

1. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.562, 31st Khurdād, 1325 (21st June, 1946).

2. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.225, 25th Khurdād, 1325 (15th June, 1946), no.228, 28th Khurdād, 1325 (18th June, 1946).

A major concession was made by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* over the gendarmerie. They foolishly agreed to a meaningless changing of the gendarme's name to 'Nigahbān', in spite of their knowledge and past experience of an unreformed gendarmerie. The American, Schwartzkopf, also retained his position as chief.¹

Finally, the point concerning land division related only to public land. No consideration was given to private land which had already been redistributed among the peasants in Azerbaijan. As a result of the treaty, the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* were forced either to pay compensation or to restore this land to the landowners, a policy calculated to be disastrous for the peasants.

The most far-reaching consequence of the treaty was perhaps the surrender of *Khamsa* and *Zanjān*. The *Khamsa* people were hurt by the action of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, since they had participated in the revolution against the central government in Azerbaijan from its inception, and had before that raised their own revolt in sympathy.² At the start of the talks between *Tabrīz* and *Tehran*, they had urged *Pīshavarī* that they resisted belonging to *Tēhran* but rather wished to belong with Azerbaijan: a declaration was issued following a meeting of 50,000 in *Zanjān* which stated:³

Zanjān is the outlet of Azerbaijan to Iran. *Khamsa* culturally, linguistically, and geographically is bound to Azerbaijan, and it is therefore not fair to exchange it with *Takāb* and *Sardasht*, bearing in mind also the large size of *Khamsa*. We are frightened of the consequences of central government control, and fight to the last man to belong to Azerbaijan.

1. For more details of Schwartzkopf, see Kuniholm, *op. cit.*, p.344n.

2. *Rahbar*, no.647, 14th Azar, 1324 (5th December, 1945).

3. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.228, 28th Khurdād, 1325 (18th June, 1946).

Pīshavarī sent a reply to this assuring the people of Khamsa that they had no cause for worry, since the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt would continue to support them: as long as the Firqa existed, Khamsa and Zanjān would be under its protection. Therefore, while the province had temporarily been given to Tehran, it was merely to allow Azerbaijan to reach a speedy agreement with the central government and thus resolve their differences.¹ Yet again, when the central government and army occupied Khamsa, the pessimism which had prevailed despite Pīshavarī's reassurances, was proved justified, for much brutality ensued throughout the province.²

The treaty signed between Tehran and Azerbaijan was followed by a rebellion in Khūzistān. This revolt was inspired among the Khūzistānī tribesmen by agents of the British in an attempt to demonstrate to the central government that concessions to democratic movements within Iran were dangerous because they were infectious: once compromises were made to Azerbaijan, other similar groups would immediately demand the same rights and treatments.³ A Union of Khūzistānī tribes was formed under the British aegis, although surreptitious and underground,⁴ which had two primary aims: to arm Arabs against the Tudeh, and the workers' unions, and to secede from Iran to Iraq if democracy should ultimately prevail in Iran.⁵

The uprising of the Qashqā'ī tribes in September 1946 was carried on the front pages of Iran's papers: army barracks were entered and the soldiers disarmed, as well as the

1. Āzarbāyjān, no.229, 29th Khurdād, 1325 (19th June, 1946).

2. For more details, see Nāmvar, R., Yā Nāma-yi Shahīdān, Tehran, 1977, pp.16-25.

3. Kayhān, no.984, 25th Khurdād, 1325 (15th June, 1946).

4. Ibid., no.1007, 4th Shahrīvar, 1325 (26th August, 1946).

5. Dād, no.835, 24th Shahrīvar, 1325 (15th September, 1946).

gendarmarie forces. Under British encouragement, the Qashqā'ī entered Isfahān, destroying its barracks and all the buildings and organisation of the Tudeh, and proclaimed the autonomous movement of Fārs.¹ The rebellion as a whole was engineered by Col. Hijāzī,² an influential reactionary army officer, who was acting in collusion with the old reactionary elements in Iran, together, of course, with the British.³

During the revolt, no reaction came from Qavām or the central government, who maintained a conspiracy of silence. This was broken with the announcement of an autonomous movement in Isfahān to which the government was forced to respond. Qavām finally sent Muẓaffar Fīrūz to Isfahān to investigate the uprising. The leaders were summarily arrested, but after great protest from the Ministry of War in Tehran, Army officers and many others, they were freed after only a few days,⁴ thus demonstrating the government's complicity. In an attempt to disguise this fact, since acts of vandalism and murder⁵ etc. were still being committed, Qavām further sent Gen. Zāhidī to Shīrāz on the pretence of an additional investigation into the affair.⁶ Zāhidī remained in Shīrāz on the pretext of the need for a governor of Fārs, to keep order, but his true function was to co-ordinate the rebellion itself. It was possibly under Zāhidī's instruction that Nāṣir Qashqā'ī sent a telegram to Qavām on 29th Shahrīvar, saying that the people in the South wanted the same rights as had been granted to Azerbaijan: if these were not given, the South

1. Dād, no.833, 21st Shahrīvar, 1325 (12th September, 1946).

2. Ibid., no.834, 22nd Shahrīvar, 1325 (13th September, 1946).

3. Īrān-i Mā, no.652, 21st Mīhr, 1325 (13th October, 1946).

4. Dād, no.836, 25th Shahrīvar, 1325 (16th September, 1946).

5. The crimes committed are listed in Īrān-i Mā, no.664, 6th Abān, 1325 (28th October, 1946).

6. Ibid., no.670, 13th Abān, 1325 (4th November, 1946).

would revolt against the central government.¹ A number of demands were also included in the telegram, resembling those of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, with the additional request for the dismissal of Tudeh members from Qavām's Cabinet.²

Qavām wired two telegrams with an identical message to Nāsir Qashqā'ī, asking him to send a representative to Tehran for talks.³ Nāsir Qashqā'ī refused, since he claimed that Qavām was employing a discriminatory policy that granted rights to one group and denied them to another.⁴ He therefore demanded instead that a representative from Tehran come to Shīrāz.⁵

The connivance of Qavām and his government became apparent, when the delegation was sent: it was composed of those in league with the Union of Khūzistānī tribes, or actually members of it, so that its bias was openly indicated; an outcome in their favour was an obvious result. Following apparent talks, the delegation therefore returned to Tehran with demands from Nāsir Qashqā'ī that were identical to those conceded in Azerbaijan.⁶

This was further confirmed by the continuation of disturbances during the negotiations.⁷ Such acts had the purpose of demonstrating to the Iranian people that concessions to democratic movements such as those in Azerbaijan, resulted only in instability in Iran, an unfavourable situation, and gave Qavām justification for their suppression.

1. *Dād*, no.843. 2nd Mihr, 1325 (24th September, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, no.844, 3rd Mihr, 1325 (25th September, 1946).

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, no.847, 7th Mihr, 1325 (29th September, 1946).

7. *Īrān-i Mā*, no.646, 14th Mihr, 1325 (6th October, 1946).

Thus, the Khūzistān rebellion was a deliberate uprising staged by the British in collusion with the Iranian reactionary elements,¹ in order to discredit the Azerbaijan movement in the eyes of the Iranian public, thus dissuading them from supporting such democratic demands. It was closely supervised both by Qavām and by Muḥammad Riżā Shāh himself,² and did not accord with the actual wishes and desires of the Khūzistānī people themselves. The tribes within Iran were traditional instruments of the British and Tehran to instigate government-planned uprisings,³ so that the participation of the Qashqā'ī clearly points to government involvement in the Khūzistān revolt.

Proof for the complicity of the central government in the Khūzistān rebellion lies in various sources.⁴ Belief in British inspiration and guidance behind the Qashqā'ī was widespread in Iran.⁵ Qavām himself was unable to hide the fact, yet no official condemnation was forthcoming from Tehran of such involvement. It was nevertheless recognised openly by Muẓaffar Fīrūz upon his return to Tehran, when he announced to the press that the uprising was engineered by Iranian traitors in collusion with the British.⁶ The press also reported that arms, ammunition and financial backing was flowing to Khūzistān out of Tehran, believed to be supplied by reactionaries within the capital.⁷ Finally, the almost immediate release of the rebellion's instigators was in sharp contrast to the arrest

1. Jabha, no.255, 4th Mihr, 1325 (26th September, 1946).

2. Mardum, no.252, 27th Day, 1326 (17th January, 1948).

3. Dād, no.846, 5th Mihr, 1325 (27th September, 1946); Rahbar, no.808, 17th Shahrīvar, 1325 (8th September, 1946).

4. See Īrān-i Mā, no.628, 24th Shahrīvar, 1325 (15th September, 1946), 641, 8th Mihr, 1325 (8th September, 1946), 649, 17th Mihr, 1325 (9th October, 1946); Rahbar, no.808, 17th Shahrīvar, 1325 (8th September, 1946).

5. Īrān-i Mā, no.641, 8th Mihr, 1325 (8th September, 1946).

6. Ibid., no.628, 24th Shahrīvar, 1325 (15th September, 1946).

7. Compare Īrān-i Mā, no.649, 17th Mihr, 1325 (9th October, 1946).

and imprisonment of two army pilots who attempted to attack Nāsir Qashqā'ī's tent.¹

Despite the efforts of Qavām and the government to hide their conspiracy, their motives in employing a policy of deterrence were seen through without difficulty by the majority of interested Iranians. As a consequence, the Khūzistān rebellion was not taken as a serious democratic movement, nor did it discourage support for the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān, or similar movements elsewhere in Iran. The only common factor obtaining between Khūzistān and Azerbaijan was foreign sponsorship:² yet even here, however, a difference of motive was clear, for while the British policy was essentially negative and destructive, the support received from the Soviet Union by the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt was at least positive, in that it was leading to a better, democratic rule in Azerbaijan.

The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt leaders were freedom lovers, reformists, progressivists; old experienced politicians, with good educations, who wanted democratic rights for Azerbaijan and for the whole of Iran, instead of its exploitation.³ Azerbaijan had also been known for centuries as the seat of popular uprisings in Iran, manifested in its primary role in the Constitutional Revolution.

The tribal chiefs, on the other hand, were uneducated men who sided with the landowners, the exploiters of the peasants. Democracy threatened their power and rule, and they were thus anxious to stamp out any indications of it when they arose. Their interests coincided not with the local population, but rather with the British outside, as evidenced in 1924 under Shaykh Khaz^c al.⁴ Khūzistān had no background

1. Īrān-i Mā, no.649, 17th Mihr, 1325 (9th October, 1946).

2. Jabha, no.258, 8th Mihr, 1327 (30th September, 1948).

3. Ibid.

4. See Chapter 1, p.32.

of democratic uprisings as had Azerbaijan.

Kayhān reported, for example: "The destruction and killing in Khūzistān was not repeated even by 1% in Azerbaijan",¹ and Qiyām-i Īrān stated: "The Azerbaijan revolution, whatever it was, was based on humanity, and wished to free millions of suppressed people. But in Fars, nothing was created except destruction and murder".²

Despite this disparity between Khūzistān and Azerbaijan, it was the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt whose leaders were arrested, imprisoned or executed, and its members harassed, while those of Khūzistān were released, and the participants in the revolt treated differentially after its failure.³

With the announcement of the elections for the 15th Majlis made by the Shāh on 14th Mihr, Nāṣir Qashqā'ī sent a telegram to Qavām giving his guarantee that order would be restored and maintained in Khūzistān if government gendarmes were removed from the province.⁴ Qashqā'ī recognised that such elections would be won by the reactionary elements in Iran, thus obviating the need for continued "rebellion". Qavām had indeed played his cards right.

Zāhidī subsequently returned to Tehran with Qashqā'ī's demands. In the Cabinet discussion, Zāhidī's approval of the revolt was faced with much opposition among the majority of its members, who were in favour of sending Iranian troops to crush the uprising.⁵ Qavām, however, gave authority to Zāhidī, without Cabinet knowledge or approval, on 13th

1. Kayhān, no.1609, 23rd Murdād, 1327 (14th August, 1948).

2. Qiyām-i Īrān, no.383, 31st Murdād, 1327 (22nd August, 1948).

3. Ibid.

4. Īrān-i Mā, no.649, 17th Mihr, 1325 (9th October, 1946).

5. Ibid., no.658, 28th Mihr, 1325 (20th October, 1946).

October, to re-open negotiations with Nāṣir Qashqā'ī in order to reach an agreement. Upon his return to Shīrāz, Zāhidī published a proclamation in which Qashqā'ī's demands were conceded, justifying the revolt and describing it as an uprising simply to gain national rights.¹ The rebellion thereupon ended peacefully, and the tribes dispersed.

Nāṣir Qashqā'ī gave his explanation of the nature of the revolt in a newspaper interview on 20th February, 1947:

We started this rebellion to prevent the control of government by left-wing parties and to stop the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt from damaging Iran's independence and integrity.²

Nāṣir Khān Qashqā'ī further admitted that the Khūzistān rebellion had been engineered by foreigners, and had engendered destruction and violence through the province. Despite their knowledge that it would be short-lived, it was a good political manoeuvre which benefitted both Iranian conservatives and foreign powers.³

The staging of the Khūzistān revolt in order to disaffect people with the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt was followed by further steps in that direction taken by Qavām. On the advice of Allen, the American ambassador to Tehran, Qavām set up the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān on June 29th, 1946, as a rival party to Tudeh, whose power was increasing, and who were allied to the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt.⁴

The Hizb-i Dimūkrāt was the official government party, around which Iranian reactionaries, such as Sayyid Żiyā and

1. Dād, no.864, 26th Mihr, 1325 (18th October, 1946).

2. Aras, no.42, 1st Isfand, 1325 (20th February, 1947).

3. Ibid.

4. Edwards, A.C., "Persia Revisited", International Affairs, 23 (1947), pp.57-58.

his followers, the Union of Khūzistānī tribes, and other conservative right-wing elements gathered.¹ The establishment of Qavām's party was met with a worried reaction from the progressive parties in Iran, and led to the formation of a coalition between the Hizb-i Īrān and the Tudeh.²

The strength of the Tudeh was dramatically demonstrated to Qavām with the Ābādān oil strike, inspired by the Tudeh.³ Qavām accordingly announced the establishment of a Coalition Cabinet on August 1st, 1946, in which four members of the two parties were appointed - three from the Tudeh, and one from the Hizb-i Īrān.⁴ Qavām justified this step, saying that "it makes it possible for all parties to participate in the implementation of reforms in Iran".⁵

The truth lies, however, in Zabih's statement that Qavām's purpose was the weakening of the Tudeh opposition.⁶

The inclusion of Tudeh and Hizb-i Īrān members in the new Coalition Cabinet raised its prestige amongst the population, among whom support for these parties ran high at this time. This was indeed political skill by Qavām, who thereby effectively removed their voice of criticism since Tudeh members were now represented in the government.⁷ The latter kept silent, therefore, and allowed time to pass for Qavām to institute reforms throughout Iran. Therein lay their greatest mistake, however, for their lack of opposition gave Qavām the time to establish himself and the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i

1. Dād, no.781, 17th Tir, 1325 (8th July, 1946).

2. Foreign Relations 1946, 7: 505-506.

3. See Chapter 3.

4. Le Rougetel to Foreign Office 2/8/46. F.O. 371/Persia '46/34-52709.

5. Ramazani, op. cit., p.147.

6. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran (pp.111-112).

7. Rahbar, no.852, 10th Aban, 1325 (1st November, 1946).

Iran. The Hizb-i Dimūkrāt ran a campaign of harassment against the Tudeh, especially in the South.

For this reason, allied with the reaching of an agreement between Qavām and Qashqā'ī to consider the Khūzistān rebellion as a revolutionary movement, and the setting up by Qavām of an electoral commission composed entirely of Hizb-i Dimūkrāt members, the Tudeh ministers withdrew from their posts in protest and the Coalition Cabinet collapsed after only 75 days existence.¹

The Tudeh stated that their alliance with Qavām had been made in the hope of gaining democracy throughout Iran. However, events had proved that Qavām in reality only desired the suppression of democratic movements, and thus the Tudeh were forced to end their co-operation in his Cabinet.² In the face of criticism that the Tudeh should never have participated in the Cabinet, the party justified its involvement on the ground that if they had not, Iran would have fragmented into warring parties.³

The Cabinet collapse was unimportant for Qavām's situation in fact, and even furthered his own interests. His own Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Iran had consolidated, and was, with the support of conservative, reactionary, and anti-Communist elements, strong enough to oppose the Tudeh.⁴ Qavām astutely realised also, however, that his co-operation and conciliatory policy towards the left-wing in Iran was drawing the disapproval of his Western allies, and therefore welcomed the break between them.⁵

1. Jabha, 21st November, 1946.

2. Iran-i Mā, no.658, 28th Mīhr, 1325 (20th October, 1946).

3. Rahbar, no.845, 1st Abān, 1325 (23rd October, 1946).

4. Jabha, 21st November, 1946.

5. New York Times, July 18th, 1946.

Qavām was worried, however, over the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān*. The *Firqa* were the only force, with a National Army and *Fidā'ī* groups, which possessed the capability of overthrowing Qavām's government. Here again, nevertheless, Qavām acted very astutely: Qavām approached the ambassador, Allen, in August 1946, informing him that his primary aim was the suppression of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* in Azerbaijan. His eagerness to achieve this goal was modified by his fear on the other hand, that such an act would lead to immediate Soviet intervention. He was therefore requesting an assurance from the United States that she would take steps on Iran's behalf in the event of such an occurrence. Allen replied indirectly, by intimating that the case would be taken up by the U.N. if events happened to make it necessary.¹

Qavām therefore invited a delegation from Tabriz to continue negotiations in Tehran, which arrived on 20th August. The delegation was confined to accomodation on the outskirts of Tehran by Qavām, in order to ensure their isolation from unwelcome lobbyists. Qavām ignored the former treaty signed between Pīshavarī and Muzaffar Fīrūz,² for his object in inviting a further delegation was merely to employ delaying tactics: negotiations would appease Azerbaijan over the treaty, but Qavām would also be able to buy the time he needed for the instigation of the *Khūzistāni* rebellion. This would function as a weapon to wield against the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* in the autonomy propaganda war being waged by Tehran.

At the same time as Qavām publicly avowed and apparently pursued a conciliatory policy, he was reaching agreement with the Shah, the Western Allies and internal conservative elements in Iran to prepare for the invasion of

1. Allen, *op. cit.*, p.59.

2. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.281, 1st Shahrīvar, 1325 (23rd August, 1946).

Azerbaijan by government troops. The Tabriz delegation remained in Tehran for two months and finally left without any conclusive agreements in hand, except over minor and insignificant points, recognising the game being played with them by Qavām, when he eventually became open with them: Qavām threatened that Khūzistān was about to separate from Iran if Azerbaijan did not give up its demands.¹

The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt were anxious not to provide Qavām with any excuse to justify his suppression of the movement. They therefore made great efforts to abide by the treaty of 13th June, 1946, as well as by the oral agreements reached by the subsequent delegation.² The Provincial Council agreed the withdrawal of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt from Zanjān: it was begun thereafter, and completed on 21st November, 1946. Resistance arose on the last day from the local Fidā'ī, but subsided upon their receipt of a message from Pīshavarī urging them not to fight.³ They also received a guarantee from Qavām that no reprisals would be made if they surrendered.

However, on 23rd November, the Iranian Army, supported by gendarmes and heavy arms, invaded Zanjān under the command of Col. Hāshimī.⁴ The Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt and trade union members were arrested and executed,⁵ so many people were killed on the streets and roads, that many became impassable; two hundred houses at least were ransacked and their occupants fled.⁶ At 1a.m., martial law was imposed in Zanjān by the central government.⁷

1. Āzarbāyjān, no.306, 2nd Mīhr, 1325 (24th September, 1946).

2. For more details, see Īrān-i Mā, no.624, 19th Shahrīvar, 1325 (10th September, 1946); Āzarbāyjān, no.355, 1st Āzar, 1325 (22nd November, 1946).

3. Āzarbāyjān, no.361, 8th Āzar, 1325 (29th November, 1946).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Khāndanīhā, yr.7, no.52, p.

7. Āzarbāyjān, no.357, 4th Āzar, 1325 (25th November, 1946).

The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* sent complaints to Qavām, protesting that only 300 gendarmes were to be brought into Zanjān according to the treaty, not the Iranian army nor the resulting bloodshed. Qavām's response came with a declaration claiming that such a force had been necessary to control the sabotage and public harassment pursued by the local *Fidā'īs*, while denying the scale of the crimes perpetrated.¹ The Tehran press also participated in the vilifying of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, portraying the democratic movement and central government in reverse roles: the *Firqa* were executing patriotic figures and were anti-monarchists, since they removed pictures of the *Shah* throughout the province.² All of this propaganda was groundless, since in reality the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* brought about public welfare and security through Azerbaijan. Its aim was to prepare the ground for the invasion of the whole of Azerbaijan.

This is shown in the declaration made by Qavām on 22nd November,³ where he said that security was a necessity for the holding of *Majlis* elections. He therefore intended sending troops to all provinces, including Azerbaijan, in order to safeguard the free electoral procedure without pressure upon the individual's choice. Qavām thus opened the way for similar action to be taken in Azerbaijan as had been initiated in Zanjān.

The effect of Qavām's declaration was, despite its clarity, one of great amazement. The governor of Tabriz, Jāvid, inquired of Qavām whether he was intending to send forces also to Azerbaijan: Qavām's reply was a clear affirmative.⁴ This sparked off another telegram from the

1. *Dād*, no.897, 11th Āzar, 1325 (2nd December, 1946).

2. *Khāndanīhā*, yr.7, no.29, 9th Āzar, 1325 (30th November, 1946); yr.7, no.33, 23rd Āzar, 1325 (14th December, 1946); *Kayhān*, no.1128, 27th Āzar, 1325 (18th December, 1946).

3. *Dād*, no.889, 7th Āzar, 1325 (22nd November, 1946).

4. *Ibid.*, no.891, 4th Āzar, 1325 (25th November, 1946).

Provincial Council of Azerbaijan, indicating that since the Azerbaijan army and gendarmes belonged to the armed forces of Iran, there existed no grounds for a further influx of troops; neither did, or should, a democratic country resort to military safeguarding of elections. The entry of military forces into Azerbaijan would be considered as an act of aggression: they urged Qavām to instead send inspectors to supervise the elections.¹

Qavām ignored the request of the Provincial Council, but made it clear in another telegram to Jāvīd that the Provincial Council possessed no authority to reject Qavām's proposal to send troops into Azerbaijan, for it in no way violated the treaty but was concerned solely with the supervision of elections. Qavām concluded by threatening Jāvīd with the consequences if Azerbaijan refused entry to Iranian forces.² This was followed by a letter in which Qavām urged Jāvīd to facilitate the entry of troops so that the elections might be soon get underway.³ A similar telegram was received by Ghāzī Muḥammad, the leader of the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Kurdistān*, from Qavām, informing him of military supervision also in Kurdistān. Ghāzī Muḥammad replied that Kurdistān's Provincial Council was well capable of supervising elections in the province, and had no need of extra, outside Iranian army forces.⁴

Qavām's response to the appeals made both by Azerbaijan and Kurdistān was indeed in violation of the treaty of 13th June, 1946: Qavām was thereby repealing the authority given to the Provincial Councils in the treaty. The pretext of electoral supervision was a very thin disguise for Qavām's real

1. *Dād*, no.897, 11th Āzar, 1325 (2nd December, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, no.895, 8th Āzar, 1325 (29th November, 1946).

4. *Ibid.*, no.896, 10th Āzar, 1325 (1st December, 1946).

intention to invade Azerbaijan, and the Azerbaijan forces were in themselves quite capable of performing the task without additional help. The necessity for troops belonged rather to the South, where the central government faced competition and resistance, and where authority ultimately rested in the hands of the British and the tribal chiefs, and outside the control of Tehran - compared to the opposite situation in the North.¹

In spite of Qavām's insistence on the need for free, democratic elections, this, too, was made under false pretences. In radio, press and newsreel interviews, Qavām claimed that the elections must be won by the Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān,² so that free elections would have been held in name only; nor would it have been possible for such a short-lived, government, party to have won in such elections.

Once Pīshavarī realised Qavām's firm intention of suppressing the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, he announced that Azerbaijan would only be entered by Iranian forces over the bodies of the Azerbaijan people.³ Thereafter, the whole of the province mobilised itself - the National Army, Fidā'ī, and a partisan group, Bābak - as well as the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt and trade unions. The paper Āzarbāyjān played an important role in the mobilisation, also informing the world of Azerbaijan's response to Qavām's policy. Thus on 1st November, an article was published under the title, "To be killed as a martyr is better than life under dictatorial rule",⁴ and another on the following day saying, "Azerbaijanis are prepared to die rather than to live under suppression".⁵ The military staff of the army college in Tabriz also went on radio urging the Iranian

1. Dād, no.892, 5th Āzar, 1325 (26th November, 1946).

2. Rahbar, no.874, 10th Āzar, 1325 (1st December, 1946).

3. Āzarbāyjān, no.357, 5th Āzar, 1325 (26th November, 1946).

4. Ibid., no.362, 10th Āzar, 1325 (1st December, 1946).

5. Ibid., no.363, 11th Āzar, 1325 (2nd December, 1946).

army not to co-operate or participate in Qavām's plan for Azerbaijan.¹

On 3rd November, a large meeting was held between members of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* and trade unions to receive permission from the movement's leaders to arm themselves. Pīshavarī declared that their intention was to gain democracy not simply for Azerbaijan but over all Iran, by replacing the reactionary central government in Tehran with a democratic one.² Pīshavarī thus gained approval from many other progressives throughout Iran, who gave Azerbaijan their support.

Simultaneously, the committee overseeing the electoral proceedings began preparations for the supervision of the 15th Majlis elections, despite the mobilisation. Qavām, however, declared their function to be illegal, since it was his decision that it belonged to the Iranian army and not to the Azerbaijan committee,³ although this, too, was an illegal act according to the 13th June treaty.

Qavām announced the entry of Iranian forces into Azerbaijan on 10th December, 1946: troops were moved from Zanjān towards Miyāna.⁴ This advance was met by mobilisation of Azerbaijani troops to the fortress of Qaflānkūh.⁵

The *Fidā'ī* were able to push Qavām's forces back to Zanjān, and Pīshavarī indeed encouraged the *Fidā'ī* groups to march all the way to Tehran in order to overthrow the

1. *Āzarbāyjān*, no.368, 18th Āzar, 1325 (9th December, 1946).

2. *Ibid.*, no.366, 16th Āzar, 1325 (7th December, 1946).

3. *Dād*, no.901, 18th Āzar, 1325 (9th December, 1946).

4. *New York Times*, November 17th, 1946.

5. This was built by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and was the strongest and best fortified stronghold in Iran.

government.¹

Qavām's policy towards Azerbaijan was carried out on the basis of a systematic and carefully developed plan. Since Iran had become an international issue, with Azerbaijan at its centre, Qavām was dealing with external factors and influences of which Azerbaijan had now become a part. British and American interest was exhibited in a concern for the suppression of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, and therefore supported Qavām's view;² on the other hand, Qavām was aware that the Soviet Union would in an eventuality not back the Firqa.³ With this knowledge, and because of it, Qavām drew up his course of action as regarded Azerbaijan.

Qavām's assessment of the Soviet reaction was confirmed by their response, which clearly indicated their acquiescence in Tehran's actions.

The Soviet military and political advisors to the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt withdrew from Azerbaijan three days before the invasion, taking with them the heavy arms which the Soviet Union had supplied to the movement, and leaving the National Army solely with light weapons.⁴ Furthermore, the Azerbaijan military commanders received orders from the Soviets to retreat from Qaflānkūh to Tabriz.⁵ Pīshavarī himself was given personal instructions not to resist, and urged together with all those who were under threat of death to flee to the Soviet Union.⁶ Pīshavarī was therefore compelled to leave Azerbaijan for the USSR⁷ and was succeeded as leader of the Firqa-yi

1. Āzarbāyjān, no.369, 19th Āzar, 1325 (10th December, 1946).

2. New York Times, November 30th, 1946.

3. Dād, no.905, 22nd Āzar, 1325 (23rd December, 1946).

4. Aras, no.77, 20th Farvardīn, 1326 (9th April, 1947).

5. Personal interview, Col.S. and Gen.K., May/August, 1982.

6. Personal interview with leading figures of the contemporary Central Committee of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, September, 1982.

7. Allen, op. cit., p.62.

Dimūkrāt by Bīriyā ¹

Consequently, despite the willingness of the Azerbaijanis to fight, the Fidā'īs advance to Zanjān, and the wide support of progressives throughout Iran, the result of the Soviet instructions² was to effect the dissolution of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt's resistance, in complete confusion, on the orders of army headquarters and the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt leaders, a retreat was thus begun.

Bīriyā subsequently declared the surrender of Azerbaijan on 11th December, 1946.³ He followed this with a further declaration the next day, urging the Azerbaijanis to lay down their arms and allow the Iranian army to enter the province.⁴ Telegrams were sent by Jāvīd and Shabistarī announcing Azerbaijan's surrender to Muhammad Rīzā Shāh and Qavām.⁵ This action foreclosed the options of the Azerbaijan public to fight and continue resistance, and they were left to await the destiny of Azerbaijan at the hands of Tehran. 70,000 National Army and Fidā'ī members, however, were recruited into the Soviet armed forces, since they did not trust the intentions of the Iranian army, and feared for their lives.⁶

The Iranian army entered Tabrīz on 13th December. Martial law was immediately proclaimed, and Gen. Hāshimī announced the annulment of all previous and standing treaties between Tabrīz and Tehran.⁷ Widespread brutality broke out, with so much slaughter that the gutters ran with blood and

1. Rossow, op. cit., p.30.

2. Abrahāmian, op. cit., p.239.

3. Āzarbāyjān, no.371, 21st Āzar, 1325 (12th December, 1946).

4. Ibid.

5. Dād, no.905, 22nd Āzar, 1325 (13th December, 1946).

6. Rossow, op. cit., p.31.

7. Dād, no.909, 27th Āzar, 1325 (18th December, 1946); Rossow, op. cit., p.31.

the streets were filled with corpses:¹ the military units' behaviour resembled that of a foreign invading army. According to eye-witnesses, **Fidā'ī** members were 'quartered' by horse carriages, with medieval savagery, together with **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** members and others.² All Azerbaijan, town by town and village by village, was occupied by Iranian forces, while the carnage proceeded apace; throughout the province, more than 20,000 civilians were killed, and many others injured.³ Even according to the records of the Iranian army, which minimised the figures, 2,500 were executed, 8,000 imprisoned, and 36,000 people expelled from Azerbaijan.⁴ This minimisation is found in Western sources also, including, for example, Robert Rossow, who puts the number merely in hundreds.⁵ William Douglas⁶ on the other hand, states that the behaviour of the Iranian troops far exceeded the brutality of the Soviet forces, while the brutality of the gendarmes and landowners in the countryside was so bad that the hardship suffered by the peasants was overwhelming: vast numbers were either killed or died from starvation, as a result of the landowners' harassment and exploitation of them.

Under these conditions, the survival of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** was an impossibility, and it therefore dissolved. Some of its members joined Tudeh committees; as a result, the Tudeh adopted the partisan policy formerly employed by the **Firqa**, instead of its own previous parliamentary approach.⁷ They subsequently went underground until February 1949, when the

1. Personal interview, A. Pūrżād, August 1982. Nāmvar, R., op. cit., pp.16-25. Kishāvarz, F., Man Muttaham Mīkunam, Teheran, 1979, passim.

2. The many witnesses include: Mr. Nawbakht, Mr. Madanī, Mr. Shamshīrī. For more details see footnote (1) ibid.

3. Kishāvarz, op. cit., p.33.

4. Mardum, special no. for Martyrs, 14th Bahman, 1327 (3rd February, 1949).

5. Rossow, op. cit., p.31.

6. W. Douglas, op. cit., p.45.

7. Personal interview with Col. Sharīfī, March 1982. And see Mardum, 5th May, 1948.

Shāh's life was threatened and the Tudeh was finally outlawed.¹

1946 ended with the suppression of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān* and the *Kurdistān* rebellion, in Iran, and the sympathetic Tudeh Party suffered much pressure from Qavām, who appointed anti-communist governors in various important provinces and encouraged direct suppression of organisation and public expression.² 1947 opened, however, still with no resolution of the proposed oil concession to the Soviets. In Soviet eyes, elections for the 15th *Majlis* were of paramount importance, in order for the ratification of the oil treaty made on April 4th, 1946.³ Anxiety for elections within Iran itself was also growing because Qavām's disguise was wearing thin, and his unpopularity was increasing. As a result, Qavām announced that elections would finally be held in Tehran from January 11th-17th, and in the provinces following that date. Progressives and nationalists in Iran were concerned that Qavām would make sure that the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān* would gain the majority, and therefore appealed to the Shāh to wield his influence to prevent such an event occurring.⁴ Either because of inability or unwillingness the Shāh did nothing, and the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān* gained an overwhelming majority in the elections, announced on February 21st, 1947.

Immediately upon the sitting of the 15th *Majlis*, however, Qavām came under sharp criticism from *Muṣaddiq* and the nationalists for even opening negotiations with the Soviets for an oil concession while the bill prohibiting concessions, passed by the 14th *Majlis*, was still in force.⁵ Qavām gave them no

1. Cuyler Young, T., "The Soviet Support of Current Iranian Policy", *MEJ*, vol.6, Spring 1952, no.2, p.140.

2. *Jabha*, 21st November, 1946.

3. *New York Times*, January 1st, 1947.

4. *Ibid.*, January 13th, 1947.

5. *Ibid.*, September 8th, 1947.

satisfactory reply, and, in anger, he walked out of the Majlis with 90 other sympathetic members.¹ Nevertheless, Qavām won a vote of confidence on October 5th, 1947, with the support of 93 members out of 120.²

It was therefore obvious that the Soviet oil concession would be rejected by the 15th Majlis, for the majority of M.P.s were pro-Western and anti-Communist, and Qavām's leanings towards America meant that the Truman Doctrine³ would be applied to Soviet expansionism in the Middle East. It was thereby refused on October 22nd, 1947,⁴ on the grounds that it had originally been made under duress.⁵

Qavām suppressed the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and the *Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan*, and the Tudeh Party, and rejected the Soviet oil concession all on the basis of Western support in the face of aggression from the Soviet Union.⁶

The Azerbaijan democratic movement arose out of general dissatisfaction with the central government's policies and the regime in Tehran. It was fueled by the readiness of the **Azerbaijanis** to fight for reforms after years of suppression, and given the opportunity to develop through the presence of Soviet forces sympathetic to democratic movements in Iran. Following the oil treaty signed with the USSR, the localised policy of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was universalised to extend over the whole of Iran. By so doing, they received further

1. New York Times, September 29th, 1947.

2. Ibid., October 6th, 1947.

3. For more details, see: Kirkendall, R.S. (ed.), The Truman Period as a Research Field: A Reappraisal, 1972, Columbia, 1974, pp.8, 11-75, 161-191; and Koenecke, op. cit., pp.101-2; and Kuniholm, op. cit., p.434ff.

4. New York Times, October 23rd, 1947.

5. Rossow, "Red Tanks", op. cit., p.171.

6. Koenecke, op. cit., p.100; Allen, op. cit., p.56.

support and backing from other progressive parties in the country, and together with others, formed the Freedom Front in November, 1946.¹ At the end of one year, the movement had reached such strength as to be able to take over Tehran: it refrained from doing so, however, as a consequence of Qavām's conciliatory attitude. This was in all probability their greatest mistake, for it gave time and occasion to Qavām to plan their destruction.

The primary factor in the events that led to the collapse of the Azerbaijan movement lay in the withdrawal of support by the Soviet Union. Confusion still exists over the radical alteration in Soviet policy: some observers² believe that it was a result of the promise of an oil concession, together with the view that Azerbaijan should be the internal affair of Iran, and opposition to the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* from within Azerbaijan itself. These reasons, however, do not do justice to the complexity or truth of the issue. Two alternative explanations can be seriously put forward: the threat made by the United States³ to drop an atomic bomb* on the Soviet Union if she did not withdraw her support from Azerbaijan, or from similar movements in the rest of the world, a threat which the Soviet Union at that time could not return.⁵ More likely, is the suggestion that the Soviet Union, America and Britain came to an agreement whereby Soviet influence was approved

1. *Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan*, *Hizb-i Jangal*, *Hizb-i Sūsyālīst*, *Hizb-i Tūdeh*, *Hizb-i Īrān*.

2. Including George Allen; cf. Papers of G.V. Allen, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo., USA, p.65.

3. For a more general account of U.S. pressure and its effect upon Soviet support, see Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan", *MEJ*, vol.10, 1956, passim; and Doenecke, op. cit., passim.

4. For more details of this threat, see ^{Nāḥḏat} Nāḥḏat-i Millī-yi Āzarbāyjān Haqqinda, Tehran 1979, passim.

5. *Rahbar*, no.627, 19th Mordād, 1324 (10th August, 1945), no.630, 23rd Mordād, 1324 (14th August, 1945), no.635, 30th Mordād, 1324 (21st August, 1945), *Shahrīvar Special No.1*, 13th *Shahrīvar*, 1324 (4th September, 1945).

in China in return for withdrawal of support from the Firza regime, Gen. Markos Vafiades¹ in Greece, the Communist Party of Italy, and other communist parties throughout the world.²

The Azerbaijan movement, while being democratic, modern and progressive, achieving many reforms, thus fell victim to international politics and intrigues and was sacrificed to factors and interests external both to Azerbaijan itself and to Iran.

Apart from those external factors enumerated above and the opposition from central government, a further crucial reason for failure was disunity amongst the progressive movement generally and central leadership of the movement in particular. The talk of unity did not translate into practice; Qavām exploited this weakness and thus systematically destroyed the threat in a manner similar to that employed in the 1979 Revolution, according to certain critics.

1. Woodhane, C.H., The Story of Modern Greece, London, 1968; Campbell, J. and Sherrard, P., Modern Greece, London, 1968.

2. Personal interview with Col. Sharīfī, March 1982.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important features of the period under study is that Iranian policy was determined, and produced, by an interaction between the country's internal troubles and her external relations.

By the beginning of the twentieth century a popular awareness was beginning to grow that the ruling classes were 'selling' Iran to foreign powers, particularly to Russia and to Britain through oil concessions. The ruling Qājār dynasty became increasingly weak and oppressive, and was almost totally obedient to the great powers. But the oppression under which peasants meantime suffered produced no more organised reaction than a gradual trickle of migrants seeking work in Russia.

But awareness also grew of the need for constitutional reform, and, as the necessary pressure on the government could not be brought by parties as we understand them, which had not yet developed, the struggle was finally won by *anjumans* which developed from *dawras* and were supported by the ^c*Ulamā*, although a major part of the process took place in Azerbaijan. Part of the motive inspiring this movement was a desire to bring Iran into line with contemporary Western Europe.

After the First World War, these *anjumans* began to grow into such parties as the *Hizb-i Dimūkrāt* and the *Hizb-i* ^c*Adālat*, which rapidly developed popular political mobilisation, but did not provide good conditions for forward-looking leadership unlike that of *Riżā Shāh*.

At this stage, Iran was in very bad order, facing

economic disaster. The country was plagued by foreign intervention, for example the Anglo-Iranian agreement of 1919, which faced much internal opposition, and the situation within the country worsened to the state that numerous revolutionary movements appeared but were negative and purely anti-Imperialist and were too physically disparate to claim any robustness; however, the way was prepared for the defeat of the Qājār dynasty and the restraint of British interference.

These disorders communicated to Britain a manifest concern as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which Iranian revolutionaries were hoping in part to emulate. The 1921 coup d'état was the only hope for prevention and Rīzā Khān, on his assumption of power, did bring some political stability to Iran. However, the freedom given to parties and unions was crushed, along with the independence and integrity of the tribes and ^Culamā, when the Shāh realized the threat which these same bodies could pose to his position.

Although Rīzā Shāh's policies modernized Iran to a modest extent, his tactics were inspired primarily by a need to set against each other Great Britain and Russia. Initially he turned to the USA with restricted success and he then resorted to Germany.

The stability brought by Rīzā Shāh is undeniable, but was of a transient and baseless nature and in the long-term damaged Iran's international position, to the extent that his dictatorial rule culminated in the tragedy that was Iran's experience during the Second World War.

The strength of Rīzā Shāh's dictatorial proclivities meant that he insisted upon the continued presence in Iran of German nationals, against the demands of the Allied Powers; this effectively justified Anglo-Russian invasion and he was forced to resign in favour of his son.

The occupation had both negative and positive results. On the positive side, Iran achieved her goal of freeing the country from Rīzā Shāh's regime and enormous freedom was suddenly granted to the political parties, trade unions and religious elements; this encouragement to new political parties came partly from occupying elements. The mushrooming of political parties came about partly due to this political 'indulgence' by the Allies and partly as a natural reaction to the sudden end of the twenty years' oppressive rule by Rīzā Shāh. But more negatively, the war-time priorities and problems caused by the Allies' presence were a hindrance to the normal development of properly constituted institutions. This poor constitutional situation was reflected in the 13th Majlis whose elected composition after Rīzā Shāh's abdication was almost identical to the body appointed by him during his power. One new departure was the introduction of 'fractions', discussion groups which were very like parties in all but name, for example, conservative, liberal and radical; these frāksiyūns supported different foreign powers. These groups, however, did not represent significant political growth throughout Iran or the blossoming of many new parties, which followed on the political hiatus which existed from 1925 until 1941. Of the many new groups formed during this new period of relative freedom of association, the most important was the Tudeh Party, which had its roots in the Hizb-i ^cAdālat of 1916, but whose real founder was Taqī Arānī, after whose death in one of Rīzā Shāh's prisons, the party formed in September 1941, assuming as their new leader Sulaymān Muḥsin Iskandarī in February 1942.

Although the party itself catered for minorities in various dependent groups, it had an ambitious appetite for its allies, trying to swallow each collaborating party into the Tudeh itself, and achieving 'take-overs' of this sort by control of the newspapers of the Anti-Fascist Society and Freedom Front of the Press, for example, which directed its activities against "class

reaction" and "royal dictatorship". By such manoeuvres, support was won particularly in the North and the South-West, amongst the intelligentsia and the urban working-class. As the Tudeh Party grew both in support and in influence, Sayyid Żiyā drew together nervous merchants, tradesmen and mullas to form the *Hizb-i Irāda-yi Millī*, whose chief aim was the eradication of the Tudeh. This campaign, waged partly as a reaction to the fear of the landowners, condemned the Tudeh Party with a charge of atheism. For example, Sayyid Żiyā in *Ra^cd-i Imrūz* said of the Revolt in Isfahān, "... the Tudeh Party is an enemy of private property, of Iran, and of Islam".¹ Alongside these two competing movements was a host of smaller political groupings, some pro-Tudeh some supporters of *Irāda-yi Millī*, whilst others took an independent line. Thus from 1941 Iran entered the age of *pārtībāzī*, party-playing. This atmosphere was repeated in the general community, where party allegiance was determined largely by membership of specific interest groups courted by particular parties. This new political structure revealed two areas of conflict; an urban, class-based one, and a more rural, ethnic discord.

During the reign of Rīzā Shāh, all power had been in one pair of hands; after his abdication, power was diffused in five directions: court, *Majlis*, Cabinet, foreign embassies, and the populace. The diverse nature of power left the new Shāh with little real power and, like his father twenty years before, he realised the need to gain popularity before turning to crush the people from a position of strength.

In deciding ultimate policy, Muḥammad Rīzā Shāh, knowing the unpopularity of his father's dictatorship, took the precaution of releasing all political prisoners, denying his father's supporters his assistance and bringing about reforms, improving theological opportunities and restoring land taken by

1. *Ra^cd-i Imrūz*, 15-25 May, 1944.

Riṣā Shāh. He simultaneously carried the favour of the upper classes, especially in Parliament.

In foreign policy, too, the Shāh was careful and determined to win the support of other powers. In return for implicit and explicit signs of willingness to assist the Allied War effort, he was rewarded by the Tripartite Treaty of 29th January, 1942, which guaranteed the position of the monarch and the integrity of the state, and an Allied policy of non-intervention in Iran. The instinctive fear of Britain and the Soviet Union generated in the Shāh by their considerable contribution to Riṣā Shāh's enforced abdication was counterbalanced by the new monarch with the introduction of a balancing third power, America. Muḥammad Riṣā Shāh appreciated the necessity of a strong military force which he would ultimately need to maintain his position, and he therefore concluded an agreement with the USA to strengthen and improve the armed forces. American involvement expanded considerably as the result of the Tehran Declaration of 1st December, 1943, signed by the USSR, the USA and Britain, which afforded America the opportunity officially to defend the Shāh and Iran against the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

The practical effect of the Tripartite Treaty and the Tehran Declaration was contrary to the theoretical implications. The Allies' promises of non-interference in internal affairs were broken, and as we have seen, the prime ministers of the 13th Majlis were reluctant to challenge the Allies at the cost of their position; a good example of this being Suhaylī's premiership. The cost of occupation was such that a vast amount of money needed to be printed to meet local wages and a real threat of great inflation existed. Suhaylī's refusal to print the necessary money caused the rapid decline in popular support which brought about his resignation in July 1942.

He was replaced by Qavām, who was more acceptable to the Allies, and who printed the required money and brought back Millspaugh as economic adviser. The resulting inflation, which caused widespread hostility, coupled as it was with American support for the Shāh, who opposed Qavām, caused the latter's downfall in February, 1943.

The patent need for foreign approval was felt by Suhaylī who, upon replacing Qavām as Prime Minister, increased Millspaugh's powers and undertook talks for an American commercial agreement and Oil Concessions to the USA and Great Britain. But despite successful foreign relations, Suhaylī too was saddled with a Shāh who insisted upon personal control of the armed forces, contrary to the Prime Minister's preferred principle that the forces should be under civilian control.

An overall analysis of the course of the 13th Majlis reveals that each Prime Minister tried to keep good relations with foreign powers, with the public and with the Shāh. But the divergence of interest, amongst the Allies, for example, made inclusive popularity impossible and the office of Prime Minister resultingly changed hands frequently. The situation was only worsened by the inability of deputies to reach consensus. The relative strength of forces within society as against organised political groups was a vital factor which played a central part in the long and comprehensive elections for the 14th Majlis. This difficulty can be appreciated when it is realized that sixteen different parties existed at the beginning of these elections which were unique in Iranian history.

In the two years following these elections, most of the parties either disappeared altogether, or amalgamated with the Tudeh Party; six parties remained to function: the Tudeh, the Hizb-i Hamrāhān, the Hizb-i Īrān, the Hizb-i ^cAdālat, the Hizb-i Ittihad-i Millī, and the Hizb-i Vatan; although many even of

these were suppressed in 1947.

The 14th Majlis convened in March 1944, the Tudeh Party taking eight seats and the Hizb-i Īrān five. But with the subsequent division into fractions, Britain was supported by the Patriots and Democrats, the Soviet Union by the Tudeh Party and Liberals, and America by Independents and National Unionists. Deputies were also influenced by local and class considerations and the composition of the Majlis was such that the Shāh feared for his own power and suspected that he might be at the mercy of his deputies. Despite the great freedom of the elections, Muṣaddiq claimed that the system was corrupt and needed reform; the Shāh, however, refused fresh elections, contributing to Muṣaddiq's later opinion that the Shāh should not interfere as if he were a cabinet minister. Throughout this period, more energy was spent in the Majlis in in-fighting than in solving critical national problems; in fact, during the course of the 14th Majlis, there followed seven prime ministers. The resignation of each was due to controversial foreign policy or simply to inter-Majlis intrigues, for example, the first Prime Minister of the 14th Majlis, being pro-West, was denounced internally by the pro-Russian Liberal fraction, and the withdrawal (externally) of Russian oil demands was bought at the cost of Sa^c Īd's resignation. The second Prime Minister, Bayāt, attempted to take a firm foreign-policy stand, by cancelling the oil concessions and reducing Millspaugh's powers over the economy, but was so weak that he was incapable of quelling anti-government riots. At this point, his supporters in the Majlis were divided, and after five months, Bayāt fell from power. His successor, Ḥakīmī, who was politically unaffiliated, lasted only two months, losing the support of the Liberals, Individuals, Democrats and Patriots as each discovered that their interests were unrepresented in the government.

In June, Ṣadr began his administration in a parliamentary boycott over his blatantly pro-British cabinet.

He went on to appoint Arfa^c to crush left-wing groups by suppressing freedom of assembly and by banning certain Tudeh publications. His premiership was ultimately weakened by the Azerbaijan crisis and it became clear that the Parliament, riddled with factionalism, could not escape internal disputes long enough to solve either internal or external problems. When the predominantly pro-Western parliament rejected Pīshavarī's credentials, the Azerbaijani people had a ready-made excuse to rise against the central government; they had long suffered under Rīzā Shāh and discovered that their wishes remained unfulfilled after his resignation.

Parliament was unthinking in its rejection of Pīshavarī, a move inspired either by Western pressure on the deputies to stop a pro-Russian, or by deputies' fears that the domination of radicals would thereafter threaten their own interests.

On Pīshavarī's return he collected the peasants, workers and discontented and on 3rd September formed the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt. The squabbling Majlis failed to resolve the situation.

It was generally recognised within Iran that the restlessness currently felt was due in large part to the inflexible attitude shown by Prime Minister Ṣadr towards any form of radicalism in the country. Ṣadr's policies thus antagonised the liberal, radical and nationalist elements in Iran, and Ḥakīmī was elected as his successor in the hope that his relatively neutralist and tolerant stance would improve the situation.

Such a solution might possibly have borne fruit had it not been for the crippling of Ḥakīmī's policies by the composition of his government. Divided within itself on the one hand, the reactionary majority still held sufficient political sway to annul Ḥakīmī's personal tolerance. Even Ḥusayn^c Alā', Ḥakīmī's main source of communication with America,

disapproved his policies. Two major factors emerged out of these circumstances: the control exercised over the country by the ruling class, represented by the reactionary **Majlis** deputies, was responsible for aggravating the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, whose members came from the liberal, radical and nationalist elements. The latter therefore took the opportunity afforded by the occupation of Azerbaijan and the North by the Red Army to revolt against the central government; **Hakīmī** further showed himself not to be as neutral as had been thought, by suddenly switching to the right and harassing the Tudeh Party. **Hakīmī** further aggravated the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** by describing it as anarchist and by claiming that Turkish was not Azerbaijan's mother tongue, but was imposed by the Mongols. He thus intensified the crisis by denying **Azerbaijanis'** rights.

The activity of the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** posed to Tehran the difficult problem of foreign intervention in Iran, and Iran's relations to the Big Powers. The **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** openly claimed Soviet support for its activity (although the USSR itself minimised such propaganda), but it was the Soviet halting of the Iranian Army at Qazvīn, November 20th, 1945, that offered a good excuse for the Iranian reactionaries to show the outside world that the crisis over Azerbaijan was an external affair, and to gain American support for its resolution by the U.N. Security Council. The West played into Tehran's hands by failing to solve the problem either at the Moscow Conference or by Bevin's proposal of a tripartite commission, for the United States and Britain both subsequently backed the Iranian suggestion made towards United Nations' participation in the issue.

The nationalist, radical, liberal and Communist elements in Iran, on the other hand, sought to localise the Azerbaijan issue, claiming that its resolution would be made simple through direct negotiations with the people of Azerbaijan and/

or the Soviet Union. This demand Ḥakīmī was incapable of fulfilling in view of the pressure exerted by his government towards pro-Western policies, and it was this fact that necessitated his ultimate resignation in favour of Qavām.

Qavām too, however, was found to be only an immediate answer for the problem, for in the long term, he proved to be pro-Western and against the democratic movement. He gave the appearance of being in control of events, but faced serious challenges from both right and left. His unorganised approach, with its tendency to improvisation and its lack of planning, differed greatly from the image presented, and Qavām thereby disguised his true aims. Whilst trying to convince the populace that he had acted with foresight and had led Iran through her period of difficulty, he was in fact rewriting his actions to suit present political needs, but always leaving his opponents just enough freedom to accommodate their becoming his friends. The multiplicity of images with which Qavām manoeuvred confused politicians and foreign powers alike. Whilst on the one hand, he seemed to try to weaken the monarchy, yet on the other his principle of 'positive equilibrium' played the Soviet Union off against Great Britain with the USA balancing between. He can fairly be said to have favoured the maintenance of the status quo rather than risk a social revolution which would doubtless threaten his personal interests.

He was fortunate in that circumstances created opportunities which he could exploit for the purposes of his own plans. He specifically enjoyed three important advantages. First, he could not be unseated from power by the Shāh since the parliament decreed that no further elections could be held during the presence of foreign troops. Secondly, the USSR trusted Qavām to negotiate fairly over the oil concessions. And finally, America trusted Qavām to negotiate with the Soviets.

Of the problems facing Qavām, two sorts distinguished

themselves: foreign policy and internal disturbances. He gave his foreign problems immediate priority and realised the Russian withdrawal from Iran by promising oil concessions in the North; simultaneously, he placated American concern by promising a similar agreement granting the USA concessions in Baluchistan, and renewing the economic mission from the United States. Meanwhile his internal policies were deliberately conciliatory, and in order to win the confidence of the left-wing radicals, he immediately stopped anti-Tudeh suppression, re-introducing freedom of assembly. He engineered the arrest of important right-wing politicians and pro-British sympathisers, including Sayyid Ziyā, Dawlatābādī, Dashtī and General Arfa, he implicitly warned the Shah not to interfere, and appointed as Chief of General Staff Razmārā, who at that time was supposed to be pro-Soviet.

During this period, Iran's main problem was not that of the occupying forces but that of the crisis in Azerbaijan, which was a cause of considerable worry to the Shah and conservative forces, both in Iran and in Britain and America. As the activities and support of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt grew in scale, so did the fears of Tehran, London and Washington. The governments of Ṣadr and Ḥakīmī were unable to reach a solution to the Azerbaijani problem, and failing to realise the true extent of the movement, initiated very rough measures against the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt, destroying all possibility of agreement between the two sides. With the formation of Fidā'ī groups, the brutality of the gendarmerie was crushed in the province and they were expelled. One by one, communities in towns and villages assumed the line of the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt and formed supportive committees; in no time at all the Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt had sprung up all over Azerbaijan, and as a result of this support they had enough courage to convene the first congress on 1st October, 1945, to plan for the future.

Although at first the movement had existed purely to

campaign for the use of Turkish in schools and offices, for the convening of the provincial councils promised by the constitutional reforms of 1905, and for tax revenue raised in Azerbaijan to be spent on development in the province, yet due to the unthinking politics of the central government, their policy changed to the formation of the National Government of Azerbaijan on 12th December, 1945. The elections for the National Government demonstrated the popularity of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, disproving the false accusations of central government that it was no more than a "handful of adventurers".

Although a popular prejudice attributes the election results to Russian interference, yet a close analysis shows the opposite - even the British Foreign Office noted that the Russians exerted very little influence.¹ In fact from the beginning of the elections, intensifying fear had inspired Tehran and the West to an increased propaganda effort against Azerbaijan and the USSR. Regardless of this pressure, the leaders of the movement in Azerbaijan displayed skill, wisdom and experience in taking united action, by disarming the local army and accepting its surrender in a duly-signed truce, on December 14th, 1945. And latterly, in declaring the wish for a pure and uncorrupted society, the National Government invited genuine co-operators to remain, but advised others to leave. At this announcement, many people, including rich landowners and merchants, became nervous and, thinking that the Communists were taking over, left hurriedly. To put further pressure upon the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, the National Bank of Iran prohibited credit and prevented withdrawal of money; but even this tactic did not weaken the movement who were now so solidly supported by the people, that they solved the problem by the creation of new factories, the introduction of a government bond scheme and the properly-enforced collection

1. F.O. 371/Persia 1943/34-35117.

of taxes. These, and many other reformative measures were much-needed in the province. Due to distrust of the Iranian army, a local army was formed. The purely defensive function of this force was misunderstood by the central government, who read it as a sign of impending separation. The newspaper, *Jabha*, in viewing these reforms, praised the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* for "implementing extensive reforms in Azerbaijan and strengthening progressive forces throughout Iran".

At this point the only solution appeared to lie in negotiations between the Central Government and the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* leaders since it was purely an internal problem and many nationalists, liberals and radicals urged negotiations. But *Hakīmī*, who was saddled with the conservatives, the pro-British and the *Shāh*, could do no more than bring the issue before the United Nations, thus turning an internal dispute into an international crisis and intensifying the Cold War between East and West. Finally, consensus existed within Iran that the only way to achieve the negotiations which were commonly proffered was to replace the Prime Minister and *Qavām* became the new Premier. Right from the start, *Qavām* played his cards well; he knew that to act at all he needed the approval of all three big powers, and that to reach that stage Russia would have to withdraw her troops and her support, something that she would not do unless her long-standing ambition of Northern oil concessions was satisfied. As the deadline for withdrawal, set at 2nd March, approached without any sign of a Russian departure from Azerbaijan, *Qavām* immediately led a delegation to Moscow to discuss the Red Army withdrawal, the oil concessions, and the Azerbaijan problem. His failure to reach actual agreement with the Soviet Union was immaterial; it did however pave the way for negotiations within Iran, and the replacement of *Kavtaradze* by *Sadchikov* as Soviet ambassador, allowed the resumption of negotiations, and finally an agreement was reached on 4th April, promising oil concessions. The Soviet Union was now to withdraw by 6th May, and *Qavām*

in return promised an oil concession, though not before the 15th Majlis had convened and approved it. But concerning Azerbaijan, Russia viewed it as an internal Iranian affair for Iran to solve alone. By this agreement, then, the Soviet Union and Iran each fulfilled the wishes of the other, yet without the resolution of the Azerbaijan problem.

Meantime, the Iranian problem had become a priority issue in the Security Council of the U.N. and between 25th and 29th March, there took place a sharp conflict between East and West concerning the presentation of the Iranian case. ^cAlā', who favoured its presentation, sought an opportunity to condemn Russia for her failure to complete the withdrawal by 2nd March. But Gromyko wanted postponement since negotiations between the USSR and Iran were well under way and the whole situation was confused by the difference between ^cAlā' and Qavām. By 29th March, a compromise resolution was adopted, calling for a full report by both sides by the 2nd April. But after the agreement of 4th April the situation was much changed, and Gromyko demanded the permanent dismissal of the case from the agenda. Qavām's similar request was refused by the West, who suspected Soviet pressure and instead proposed to keep the crisis on the agenda until 6th May at least.

After satisfying himself of Russian contentment with the promise of a joint-stock company, he turned his attention to the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt**, negotiating an agreement which was welcomed by the public, particularly progressives, but which was not as valuable as it seemed, depending as it did in large part upon the approval of the 15th Majlis not yet in session. However, the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt** were very determined to end animosity between Azerbaijan and Tehran, and agreed to the treaty, turning the National Government into a provincial council. This resolution to the problem proved wrong the fears of those who assumed that the movement intended separation from the rest of Iran. Instead, the results of the

National Government had been the welcome ones of building schools, hospitals and a University, and generally raising the standard of living.

After the signing of the agreement, *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* policy changed, so that the slogan now read "Democratic liberty not only for Azerbaijan but for the whole of Iran", and the movement realised widespread support throughout Iran. In parallel with this agreement, Qavām seemed to favour the left-wing, but because of his fears of the fast-growing Tudeh Party, he formed the Democrat Party of Iran, which would represent his interests in the elections for the 15th *Majlis*. This party ultimately became a refuge not only for conservatives but also for all who feared Communism. As the Tudeh Party and Iran Party continued to grow in strength, Qavām silenced them by forming a coalition with them in August so that he could execute his own plans. It was a serious mistake on the part of these two parties to enter the coalition, as by so doing they removed their own platform from which to criticise the government. This self-imposed vulnerability proved fatal when the apparent left-turn of Qavām attracted the stern attention of the *Shāh*, Great Britain and the tribal leaders, whose interests seemed to be threatened. It may have been this pressure upon Qavām which forced him to choose a move to the right-wing, and once again he re-imposed oppression against the Tudeh Party, appointing anti-Communist governors of the more restless provinces, and released Sayyid *Ẓiyā*, *Kāshānī* and others of that general persuasion.

The main cause of Qavām's nervousness was the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, and the premier realised he had to end its influence as subtly and diplomatically as he could. With his failure to implement the agreement which had been reached between the sides, Qavām faced much criticism. He therefore invited the *Azerbaijani* delegation to come to Tehran to make another

agreement to enforce the original one and kept them there, while reaching no substantial conclusion, but merely placating the representatives with a few verbal ^{mises} provinces; eventually, the delegation returned to Azerbaijan hoping for a continuation of negotiations. Qavām's delaying tactics appear to have been intentional in order that he might carry through his own policies.

At this stage, however, the rising of Southern tribes who wanted the same concessions as were given to Azerbaijan, gave Qavām a useful weapon. He threatened Azerbaijan, saying that if she did not give up her own claims, Khūzistān might separate altogether from Iran. In truth the case of the southern tribes was in no respect comparable with that of the Azerbaijan crisis, but was politically manipulated by Britain, Qavām and the conservative forces within Iran to pressurize Azerbaijan.

Progressives, and particularly the Tudeh Party, were angered that Qavām described as a "democratic movement seeking its rights" an uprising which was violent and claimed many army lives. Finally, when Qavām appointed solely from the Democratic Party of Iran a Supervisory Council for the elections to the 15th Majlis, the Tudeh Party angrily withdrew from the coalition, unwittingly removing its problematic presence from Qavām, precisely as he wished.

Furthermore, Qavām reduced the problems cause by the Tudeh's influence upon all the Trades Unions, by creating the Central Syndicate of Iranian Craftsmen, Farmers and Workers to counterbalance the influence of the former movement; this very artificial creation was of limited effectiveness and as the populace realized that it was a puppet movement created to suit Qavām's plans, the movement faded away altogether.

Meanwhile, by the treaty of 4th April, signed with the

Soviet Union, Qavām had silenced the Russians who avoided interfering in Iranian internal affairs because she had had the granting of her wishes promised by the Central Government. Simultaneously, however, by breaking with the extreme left, Qavām pleased the West, the Conservatives and the Shāh. After ensuring Western support, then, the prime minister prepared to send his troops into Azerbaijan and Kurdistan on the pretext of supervising the elections to the 15th Majlis. Qavām's hostile attitude towards the revolutionary movements within Iran's more troublesome provinces outweighed the influence of the many figures who urged him to avoid this course of action, and when he made his intention public, Azerbaijan immediately mobilised against the force, on the understandable principle that no truly democratic country uses troops to supervise its elections. The *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* leaders called upon the premier to send a supervisory group instead, but continued military preparations since they had learned from their experience following the April 23rd Treaty, by which Zanjān was handed back amid serious army disorders and looting. The action of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was in opposition to what they well knew was effectively an invasion force, but Qavām was confident of foreign support and the non-interference of the USSR, and on 10th December ordered military action.

With the steady advance of the Iranian force and the readiness of the Azerbaijani people to support their patently capable and strong army and *Fidā'ī* groups, suddenly the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* ordered surrender, under pressure from the Soviet Union, and to the total confusion of much of the population. The subsequent invasion of Azerbaijan and the days of violence and slaughter which ensued constitute arguably one of the most shameful incidents in recent history. Many *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* fled to the USSR, and the decision to surrender ended all hope that Azerbaijan could be a prosperous province as it had been for the previous year. Commentators should not, however, be unduly harsh upon the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, since

they were bound to Soviet advice and their need for foreign support precluded their disobedience and political independence.

Turning to a more comprehensive, national perspective, a clear problem exists: why, when the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* enjoyed significant national support, did they not unite with other progressives to effect a coup d'etat in Tehran? Part of the answer lies in the circumstances of Azerbaijan itself. Not only was that province the main beneficiary of the provincial fervour and autonomous zeal of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt*, but there conveniently existed the very power vacuum which the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* was in a perfect position to fill. Soviet help, too, is noteworthy. The territorial arrangement was such that Azerbaijan was the Iranian province most accessible to Soviet protection and the indeterminacy of the border made Soviet involvement natural.

However, more general reasons exist for the failure of the progressive movements in the country to overthrow what they viewed as a repressive and reactionary Central Government. The recourse by such movements as the Azerbaijan National Government to foreign support meant that nationwide co-operation was unfortunately foregone and there was insufficient progressive co-operation to seize the crucial opportunity granted by the resignation of *Riżā Shāh*. Therefore the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* are not totally guiltless for the maintenance in Iran of some kind of unwelcome administration, although the geographic and logistical factors enumerated above cannot be ignored. Foreign interest in Iran must not be ignored altogether. The country was strategically and economically very important indeed to Britain, America and the Soviet Union, and none of these powers wanted either of the others to have an undue advantage. The suppression of the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* movement was due in large part to the fears

of the big powers that serious repercussions would be felt throughout the Middle East because of the influence enjoyed by the movement throughout Iran. The diversity of Soviet interests worldwide meant that she could not give the concentrated attention which would have been necessary to prevent the defeat of the National Government of Azerbaijan.

The apparent aim of the **Azerbaijanis** to carry out into Iran the success enjoyed within the province was prevented by the suppression not only of the autonomous movement but also of the Tudeh and Irān Parties and the Trade Union movement.

The tactical success enjoyed by Qavām in successfully suppressing the **Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt-i Āzarbāyjān** and the **Hizb-i Kumala-yi Kurdistan**, continued to favour him in the 15th Majlis elections. Despite losing the support of the left wing and Iranian progressives, Qavām controlled the Supervisory Electoral Council in Tehran and the Democratic Party of Iran won the election holding all twelve Tehran seats, and eighty altogether. Its membership which included both the very rich and the underprivileged poor, was represented by an overwhelming majority in the Majlis and this factor, combined with strong Western pressure made the rejection, of Soviet oil concessions, in the forthcoming debate, a foregone conclusion, and left the USSR powerless to object.

Although the Shāh had been only a figurehead during the period 1941-47, he gained much power in 1948 by his manipulation of the political situation and by his military strength. An attempt on his life in the following year gave him an excuse to crush all threats to his position, and the Tudeh Party, along with Musaddiq and Qavām, disappeared from political importance. A constitutional assembly created a Senate, half of which was to be appointed by the Shāh and he was given absolute power to dissolve Parliament, ordering fresh elections.

1941-1947 was a period of political liberty in Iran, but opportunities were wasted by the lack of cohesion amongst the progressive elements of political society. When power was assumed once more by the Shāh, a unique chance to win real constitutional democracy had finally been lost.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE KAVTARADZE STATEMENT

The following is extracted from the statement of Mr. Kavtaradze, Soviet Deputy-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, made at a press conference in Teheran, October 24, 1944:

For reasons of expediency and the attraction of oil deposits, the USSR intends to obtain concessions in Azerbaijan, Gīlān and Māzandarān, and parts of Simnān and Khurāsān, north of Qūchān.

The territorial definition of the concessions would be determined by the workable areas of already established oil deposits.

The Iranian government would receive tonnage royalties plus a share of the profits and compensation for tax exemption, with an agreed minimum concession payment.

Iran would also benefit from reduced prices for oil-based products. In exchange, she would provide technical control, and assessment of the financial arrangements.

Upon the expiration of the concession, Iran would be given ownership of all the enterprises, with no demand for compensation. Thousands of Iranian workers and peasants would be employed, particularly those engaged in transporting war supplies from Iran to the Soviet Union, who would be supervised by the Soviets.

Subsidiary industry would grow in response to the need

for workers' accommodation, workshops, roads etc., as well as the vast expansion of the building-materials industry. A beneficial side-effect of the geological research involved would be the extraction of related minerals.

A special fund would be set up for health and sanitary facilities of the workers engaged in the concession.

Intellectuals, too, would find opportunities to apply their expertise.

Connected to the oil development would be that of water supplies, connected with irrigation, which would benefit the public welfare of these districts.

The local agricultural resources would be utilised extensively, and developed because the stable wages would create a demand for agricultural and industrial products to the advantage of trade and the local transport industry.

The Soviets' interest in the oil concession would be realised in the possession of heavy technical equipment, and was prepared to give Iran the considerable economic advantages mentioned above.

The USSR anticipated the acceptance of the Iranian government and immediate negotiations over the matter.

The Prime Minister promised assistance to the Deputy-Commissar. The postponement until the end of the war was considered tantamount to refusal. The Soviets did not approve of this: Sa^cid appeared to be bringing about worsening relations between the two countries. The Iranian government gave no convincing reason for their decision, despite the weighty arguments in favour of the proposed economic link.

The Deputy-Commissar believed that the strong relationships between the Soviet Union and Iran, which survived the war, would overcome these difficulties, and appealed for the assistance of the Iranian press to help to bring the matter about.

When asked whether the concessions were considered before the Government Commission visited northern Iran, and whether the postponement was also prior to the visit, Kavtaradze replied:

After the return of the Government Commission from northern Iran, the negative reply of the Iranian government was received. The USSR received the Commissar's report before the meeting with Sa^cīd, and was instructed to begin the negotiations. Various meetings were held with the Prime Minister. When rumours circulated to the effect that the concession would be refused, the Prime Minister was asked openly what his intentions were. At that point, the postponement until after the war was decided upon; this amounted to a refusal to grant the concession. This was on October 11th.

APPENDIX B

THE LIFE OF JA^CFAR PĪSHAVARĪ

A proper understanding of the nature of the role played by the *Firqa-yi Dimūkrāt* in Azerbaijan can only be gained through the context of the background and character of its leader - Ja^Cfar Pīshavarī.¹

Pīshavarī was born in 1894 in Khalkhāl, Azerbaijan. His parents both held extreme radical views. As a result of the unease that these circles created in the eyes of the government, the family moved to the Caucasus when Pīshavarī was twelve. Upon starting school, Pīshavarī without delay obtained a job as a servant on the school premises, in line with his belief that those with the opportunity to study should not exploit it by not supporting themselves at the same time. On finishing his studies, he then joined the school as a member of staff.

Throughout this period, Pīshavarī exhibited a strong intellectual bent, spending most of his time until the age of 20 reading history, literature and philosophy in the library. It was these interests that formed the background for his involvement in politics. This surfaced forcefully with the outbreak of WWI and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Pīshavarī supported the revolutionaries out of a sincere belief that the oppressive exploitative Czarist régime ought to be overthrown, as well as from a patriotic feeling that socialist revolutionary rule would benefit Iran, for the Czar had

1. This brief biography is drawn from many sources, but in particular we have made use of a series of autobiographical articles published in *Āzhīr*, 1943-4, and of the parliamentary proceedings of the Majlis, 1944.

systematically abused Iranians since the 1907 agreement Russia had entered into with Britain, under which Iran was to be divided equally into the two respective spheres of influence of each.¹ His assessment proved later to be correct, in the light of the February 1921 Treaty made between the Soviet Union and Iran.²

Pīshavarī's political career in Iran began with the publication of pamphlets reflecting deep socialist tendencies. He was subsequently given a post as editor of the newspaper *Ḥurriyat* (Liberty), which came out in support of the workers. This was followed by the paper *Āzhīr* (Alarm) in the 1940s, the most radical and outspoken journal of its time. Pīshavarī remained a consistent supporter of the working class all his life, and a prominent fighter for their rights. It was an attitude clearly reflected in the emphasis upon justice and welfare for workers made in all his writings.

With the rise of the *Gīlān* movement in the early 20's,³ Pīshavarī began to take an active role in its struggle. When it attempted to extend its activities beyond *Gīlān*, in the hope of overthrowing the central government, Pīshavarī himself moved to Tehran. When the movement collapsed in 1922, Pīshavarī transferred his efforts towards establishing a trades union movement in Iran. He contributed a large majority of the articles in the official organ, *Ḥaqīqat* (Truth). The trades union movement witnessed a spectacular growth from its small beginnings, and by 1923 had a membership of around 7,000. When *Riżā Shāh* came to power in 1925, however, it was one of the movements destined to be banned by the new ruler. Its leaders were arrested on *Riżā Shāh's* orders, and its top

1. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, New York, 1920, pp.xxiv-xxviii.

2. For more details, see Ramazani, R., *The Foreign Policy of Iran 1500-1941: A Developing Nation in World Affairs*, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1964, pp.139-167, 186-192.

3. Zabih, S., *The Communist Movement in Iran*, California U.P., 1966.

échelon was destroyed four times in all. Consequently, Pīshavarī and various other leaders switched their centre of activities to Europe, from where they attempted to smuggle literature back into Iran for dissemination. Eventually, they were arrested in 1929 by Rīzā Shāh and imprisoned¹ for their radical politics and their involvement with the trades union movement.

Pīshavarī and his colleagues continued their outspoken criticism of the regime even in the face of abuse and torture. Their firm resolve and unity were sufficient to prevent savage treatment by the warders, however. Then, after eight years, the group was joined in the Palace prison by Arānī and the '53', who were arrested in 1937. Their presence proved to be a great encouragement to Pīshavarī and his colleagues, for although the '53' were inexperienced, they were still proof of the continuing resistance to the central government. Pīshavarī, too, was an inspiration and symbol of patient endurance to Arānī and the '53'.

In 1939, Pīshavarī was released by Rīzā Shāh and exiled to Kāshān, where he was forbidden any social contact. He was rearrested, however, in 1940, but regained his freedom a year later as a result of the general amnesty granted with the invasion and occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers. Soon afterwards, he resumed publication of *Āzhīr*.²

Pīshavarī never entertained personal opportunism for furtherance of his political career.³ In 1941 he was encouraged

1. For a full account of Pīshavarī's imprisonment, see Pīshavarī, S.J., *Yāddāshthā-yi Zindān*, Teheran, n.d., *passim*.

2. *Āzhīr* was published during 1943-4 as an independent paper. Its two aims were: a) to lend support to the working class, and b) to create a free, democratic and independent Iran. It was against all reactionaries and was influential among 'freedom-lovers'. Cf. *Yāddāshthā-yi Zindān* (My Memoirs in Prison), Teheran, for Pīshavarī's prison experiences.

3. *Āzhīr*, year 1, no.96, 27th Āzar, 1322 (18th December, 1943).

by many to stand as candidate for Tehran in the elections to the 13th **Majlis**, but he declined the opportunity. The Tudeh similarly asked for his candidacy in Ardabīl (Azerbaijan) and were refused on the grounds that he was neither ready nor willing. He did, however, accept nomination for the 14th **Majlis** by the Tudeh and Freedom Front, for Azerbaijan, in 1943.¹ In the confusion that surrounded the elections, neither the credentials of Pīshavarī nor those of Khū'ī were accepted. Pīshavarī had been elected on the Freedom Front ticket, gaining over 15,000 votes. In his programme, he emphasised the primary need for adherence to the Constitutional Law. With respect to internal policy, Pīshavarī urged free education for all; the guarantee of individual and public rights; reform of both civil and police courts; nationalisation, reform of the army; the election of provincial and town councils, and fair and free elections. His foreign policy advocated friendly relations with all Iran's neighbours, especially the USSR, as well as with Britain.

Judging from his intentions, Pīshavarī represented a very progressive stand. It was due mainly to this that the **Majlis** first prevaricated in confirmation of his seat, and later refused his credentials. The challenge which Pīshavarī presented to Sayyid Ziyā's position within the **Majlis** was the prime cause of this refusal, for there was nothing in his own career which could render him an object of suspicion: he had been imprisoned without charge for 10 years by Rīzā Shāh; he possessed no political record by which he could be incriminated, and could not be accused of having obtained his election by bribery, since he was far from rich. Indeed, there was no doubt about his personal character, good behaviour or capability in the minds of many members of the **Majlis**.²

1. Āzhār, year 1, no.93, 20th Āzar, 1322 (11th December, 1943).

2. Dād, no. 29, 24th Āzar, 1321, (15th November, 1942).

With this firm rejection, Pīshavarī turned again to Azerbaijan, and declared that since he had been refused acceptance to the Majlis, he would enter politics in some other way.¹ In an article in Āzhīr he said that he knew that the votes which he had received in Azerbaijan indicated the people's determination to obtain political redress for their neglected cause. He was therefore himself, in response to the trust which they had placed in him, to defend their rights by whatever means were at his disposal. His fulfilment of this promise is substantiated by the activities and events described in Chapter 4. In the National Government which was eventually formed, Pīshavarī was elected Prime Minister, December 12th, 1945 - December 12th, 1946. During this time, he effected a large measure of reform within Azerbaijan. While he was in Tabriz he continued the publication of Āzhīr, through which he communicated with the people. His main aim was to prevent the tyranny of the central government over Azerbaijan, end its dictatorial rule,² and establish democratic rights in the province according to the dictates of the Constitutional Law.

Pīshavarī insisted upon the Azerbaijani culture and language being made available to all her people. This dependence upon Azerbaijan autonomy was not, he repeatedly stressed, to be at the expense of the independence, freedom and integrity of Iran.

However, as a result of international pressure³ in December 1946, Pīshavarī was forced into exile in the Soviet Union, which was an appropriate, although misunderstood, place of exile, since "He was the friend of the Soviet Union, not its servant".⁴ He later requested from the Soviet

1. Āzhīr, year 2, no. 167, 20th Tir, 1323 (11th July, 1944), 168, 22nd Tir, 1323 (13th July, 1944).

2. Ibid., year 1, no.91, 15th Āzar, 1322 (6th December, 1943).

3. See Chapter 6.

4. Lajavardi, Politics and Labour in Iran, 1941-49, Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1981.

government permission to return to Azerbaijan to resume the struggle for autonomy. Immediately after this request, however, Pīshavarī was killed in an automobile accident.¹ It is still unclear whether his death was deliberately brought about or accidental; future events may possibly shed some light on the circumstances of the death of a man whose whole life was directed towards the defending and upholding of Azerbaijan rights, and whose memory will always be held dear by Azerbaijanis.

1. See, personal interview with Mr. A. Shujā^cī, 1982; H. Lajavardi, op. cit., p.300.

APPENDIX C

PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN

The National Government of Azerbaijan recognised that the dream of autonomy also constituted the solution to Azerbaijan's problems. It therefore adopted as its immediate goals the following programme:

1. The first step in consolidating an autonomous existence was the world-wide publication of information on the autonomous status of Azerbaijan. The democratic National Government was to be set up after the appropriate negotiations, to maintain the integrity of Iran. Nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of obtaining this principal objective.
2. The initial electoral procedure leading to this was elections to the **Anjumans**, which would have control over the local authorities.
3. In the towns, elections for the **Anjumans** should be held immediately on the basis of broad democracy to give the correct direction to their work in improving municipal administration.
4. Peace and order would be maintained and supervised by **Bakhshdārs** and **Farmāndārs** appointed from democratic, honest citizens.
5. The old corruption in the Police Force and gendarmerie was to be purged by removal of the officials involved. They would be replaced by patriotic freedom supporters,

who would perform their duties in accordance with Azerbaijani interests.

6. A study was to be initiated into the Azerbaijan budget: a national budget would subsequently be drawn up and presented to the approval of the **Majlis**. This would serve in the interests of the development of the country.
7. A "popular guard", made up from the detachments in towns and villages should be set up to defend Azerbaijan's autonomy, its parliament and the future of the National Government.
8. The educational system was to be reformed in a double aspect. First, Turkish was to be the official language in schools; secondly, free education would be provided for children of school age, in a general campaign against illiteracy. A National University was to be established for further education purposes.
9. Trade and industry would be encouraged; order was to be brought to factories and mills. New factories would stimulate a new consumer industry and trade would thus increase.
10. Roads and communications (telegraph, telephone and postal services) would be urgently repaired in view of their state of inefficiency.
11. New laws would resolve the conflict between the peasants and landowners.
12. A scheme aimed at reducing unemployment would distribute land belonging to the state and to absent landowners who were vilifying Azerbaijan autonomy to the peasants. The credit functions of the Agricultural Bank would be

strengthened so that peasants could buy land at moderate prices from those landowners who wished to sell property.

13. Further anti-unemployment measures would encourage the expansion of handicrafts, and the extension of industry and road-construction, as well as the development of trade and agriculture.
14. A bill improving the material welfare of workers would be introduced in the **Majlis**, plus compulsory insurance for workers and office-employees.
15. Health insurance would be guaranteed, with free care for the needy, and organised, concentrated campaigns against epidemics.
16. Private property was to be respected, and the National Government would encourage private enterprise to improve the economy.
17. There was to be complete freedom of conscience and religion.
18. All nationals - Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians and others - had identical rights and duties while resident in Azerbaijan.
19. Recognition of the central government meant that all measures which did not limit an autonomous existence would be obeyed, at all times preserving the popular rights and demands as expressed by the Popular Assembly and the national parliament of Iranian Azerbaijan.

APPENDIX D

GENERAL DIPLOMATIC TREATY OF 4th APRIL, 1946 BETWEEN IRAN AND USSR¹

The negotiations begun by Qavām in Moscow and carried through by Sadchikov in Tehran, have reached agreement on the following points:

1. Withdrawal of the remaining Soviet forces from Iran would commence on March 24th and would be completed in six weeks.
2. A treaty should be concluded between the two countries concerning the proposed joint-stock oil company and its structure, which should be given to the Majlis for its approval over seven months, in order to circumvent the standing prohibition upon oil concessions.
3. The Soviet Union would leave the Iranian government to deal with the Azerbaijan problem and fulfil their wishes by peaceful means as far as was possible for Qavām under the Constitutional Law, since Azerbaijan was an entirely internal Iranian affair.

TREATY ON JOINT-STOCK OIL COMPANY, 4th APRIL, 1946 BETWEEN IRAN AND USSR²

1. The treaty mentioned previously should last for 50 years, during the first half of which, the Soviets would own

1. P. Humayunfar, La Crise Azerbaijan, Paris, n.d., p.114.

2. Rahbar, no.688, 20th Farvadīn, 1325 (7th April, 1946).

51% and Iran 49% of the oil company, and in the latter half, 50% would be owned by each.

2. The concessions would cover the areas of Azerbaijan, Gīlān, Māzandarān, parts of Šimnān and of northern Khūrāsān, north of Qūchān.
3. Iran would contribute capital in the form of territory; the Soviet Union would pay all the expenditure, salaries, overhead costs, etc. The profit would be divided according to the input of each partner.
4. Security would be the responsibility of the Iranians.
5. The Treaty should be submitted to the Majlis for approval within seven months.

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